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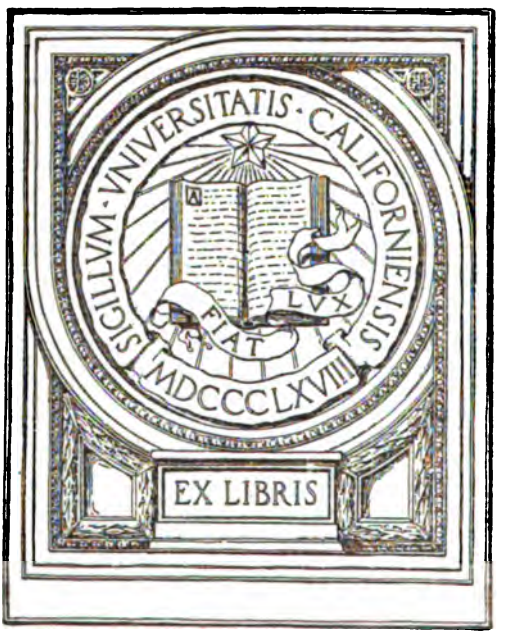

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GOD & THE BIBLE

A REVIEW OF OBJECTIONS TO 'LITERATURE AND DOGMA'

BY

MATTHEW ARNOLD

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'Im Princip, das Bestehende zu erhalten, Revolutionären vorzubeugen, stimme ich ganz mit den Monarchisten überein; nur nicht in den Mitteln dazu. Sie nämlich rufen die Dummheit und die Finsterniss zu Hülfe, ich den Verstand und das Licht.'

GOETHE.

('In the principle, to preserve what exists, to hinder revolutionists from having their way, I am quite at one with the monarchists; only not in the means thereto. That is to say, they call in stupidity and darkness to aid, I reason and light.')

PRÉFACE

In reading through the following chapters, I see that the faults, as I think them, of German critics of the Bible are marked with an emphasis which renders necessary some acknowledgment of the other, the meritorious, side in those critics, and of the much gratitude due to them. Their criticism, both negative and constructive, appears to me to be often extremely fanciful and untrustworthy. But in collecting, editing, and illustrating the original documents for the history of Christianity, those critics now perform for the benefit of learning an honourable and extremely useful labour, once discharged by Paris, Oxford, and Cambridge, but discharged by them no longer;—perform it with modern resources, and for the most part admirably. Some of them are men of great ability. Ferdinand Christian Baur, whose theories respecting the Fourth Gospel are controverted in the following pages, was a man of pre-eminent ability. His exegesis is often full of instruction and of light. Whoever wishes

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to be convinced of it has only to turn to his remarks on the phrase *poor in spirit*,[1] or to his exposition of the parable of the unjust steward.[2] Nevertheless Baur is, on the whole, an unsafe guide, for a reason which makes the generality of critics of the Bible, in the Protestant faculties of theology in Germany, unsafe guides. These professors are under strong temptations to produce new theories in Biblical criticism, theories marked by vigour and rigour; and for this purpose to assume that things can be known which cannot, to treat possibilities as if they were certainties, to make symmetry where one does not find it, and so to land both the teacher, and the learner who trusts to him, in the most fanciful and unsound conclusions. There are few who do not succumb to their temptations, and Baur, I think, has succumbed to them.

Even while acknowledging the learning, talents, and services of these critics, I insist upon their radical faults; because, as our traditional theology breaks up, German criticism of the Bible is likely to be studied here more and more, and to the untrained reader its vigorous and rigorous theories are, in my opinion, a real danger. They impose upon him by their boldness and novelty. To his practical hold on the Bible they conduce nothing, but rather

[1] *Geschichte der christlichen Kirche*, vol. i. p. 26.
[2] *Kritische Untersuchungen über die kanonischen Evangelien*, p. 450.

divert from it; and yet they are often really farther from the truth, all the while, than even the traditional view which they profess to annihilate.

The alleged bitter hatred of St. Peter and the other *pillar*-apostles against St. Paul, and St. Paul's reciprocation of it, is a case in point. This hatred is supposed to have filled the first years of the Christian Church, and to give the clue to its history. The invectives in the Apocalypse against Balaam and his followers are said to be aimed at Paul and Pauline Christianity. The Simon Magus of the pseudo-Clementine Homilies is taken to be Paul, and Peter's unwearying war against Simon Magus and his false doctrine represents Peter's war against Paul.[1] The Acts, finally, are a late work designed to wipe out the memory of this hatred, and to invent a harmony between Paul and the pillar-apostles which never existed. Now, it is easy to dress up this theory so as to make it look plausible, but I entirely disbelieve its truth. To its vigorous and rigorous inventors the consideration that the nearness of the pillar-apostles to Jesus, and that the religious greatness of St. Paul, were good for very little if they could not so much as prevent a hatred

[1] Paul is, in fact, 'der Apostate, der Irrlehrer, dessen als samaritanisische Ketzerei bezeichnetes falsches Evangelium höchst wahrscheinlich die Entstehung der ganzen Sage von dem Magier Simon veranlasst hat.'—Baur, *Lehrbuch der christlichen Dogmengeschichte*, p. 65.

of this kind, will probably appear quite insignificant; with me it has, I confess, serious weight. It would need plain and strong facts to make me accept, in despite of this consideration, the Tübingen theory. But no such facts are forthcoming.

The identification of the Balaam of the Apocalypse with Paul requires us first to assume that the Tübingen theory is true. Now, the evidence of Paul's own letters is against the theory. True, there was difference between him and the older Apostles respecting the obligation of the Jewish law. They were narrower and more timid than he was, and he tells us of his having once at Antioch 'withstood Peter to the face because he was to be blamed.' But he tells us, also, of his having come to a satisfactory arrangement with the pillar-apostles, and of their having 'extended to him the right hand of fellowship.' The hardest word he has for them is to call them 'apostles exceedingly.'[1] On the other hand, quite distinct from the pillar-apostles whose action it sought to force, is the real Judaising party whom Paul stigmatised as 'false brethren,' and to whom he 'will not give place by subjection, no, not for an hour.'

Again, of real antinomianism in morals among his Gentile converts Paul clearly saw the danger and vehemently rebuked the symptoms. He

[1] *τῶν ὑπερλίαν ἀποστόλων.*—2 Cor. xi. 5, and xii. 11.

discountenanced, even, all unnecessary displays of liberalism and of superiority to prejudice, which might offend and do harm. Now, the Peter of the pseudo-Clementine Homilies controverts nothing that can be said to be Pauline. But he attacks either Gnostic heresies, or else that antinomianism in morals which is well known to have been rife in some of the Gnostic sects. True, he represents his profane opponents as questioning his authority, and as *withstanding* him; and the language which he attributes to them is undoubtedly an adaptation of Paul's language in the Epistle to the Galatians. This is the whole and sole foundation of positive proof for the alleged hatred between Peter and Paul. But what could be more natural, than that the antinomian enemies of strictness of every kind should have possessed themselves of phrases of Paul, the great liberal, and above all should have possessed themselves of his famous rebuke of the narrower and more timid Peter, and turned it against whoever blamed and restrained them; and that such an employment and such employers of Paul's language are what the Peter of the Homilies has in view? For my part, I feel convinced that this is the true explanation, and that the plausible theory of the bitter and persistent hatred between St. Peter and St. Paul is quite erroneous. But if erroneous it is, how grave is the error! and in how serious a misconception of the beginnings

of Christianity does it involve us! This must be my defence, if I appear to have dwelt too much on the untrustworthiness of the authors of this and similar theories, not enough on their learning and acuteness.

In revising the present volume, the suspicion and alarm which its contents, like those of its predecessor, will in some quarters excite, could not but be present to my mind. I hope, however, that I have at last made my aim clear, even to the most suspicious. Some of the comments on *Literature and Dogma* did, I own, surprise me, in spite of a tolerably long experience of men's propensity to mistake things. Again and again I was reproached with having done, in that book, just what I had formerly blamed the Bishop of Natal for doing. But *Literature and Dogma* had altogether for its object, and so too has the present work, to show the truth and necessity of Christianity, and its power and charm for the heart, mind, and imagination of man, even though the preternatural, which is now its popular sanction, should have to be given up. To show this, was the end for which both books were written.

For the power of Christianity has been in the immense emotion which it has excited; in its engaging, for the government of man's conduct, the mighty forces of love, reverence,

gratitude, hope, pity, and awe,—all that host of allies which Wordsworth includes under the one name of *imagination*, when he says that in the uprooting of old thoughts and old rules we must still always ask :—

> Survives *imagination*, to the change
> Superior? Help to virtue does she give?
> If not, O mortals, better cease to live!

Popular Christianity, drenched in the preternatural, has enjoyed abundantly this help of the imagination to virtue and conduct. I have always thought, therefore, that merely to destroy the illusions of popular Christianity was indefensible. Time, besides, was sure to do it; but when it is done, the whole work of again cementing the alliance between the imagination and conduct remains to be effected. To those who effect nothing for the new alliance but only dissolve the old, we take once more our text from Wordsworth, and we say :—

> Why with such earnest pains dost thou provoke
> The years to bring on the inevitable yoke,
> Thus blindly with man's blessedness at strife?
> Full soon his soul will have its earthly freight ;—

soon enough will the illusions which charmed and aided man's inexperience be gone; what have you to give him in the place of them?

Dr. Colenso had nothing, and hence our dissatisfaction with his work. But undoubtedly it is not easy to re-unite man's imagination with

his virtue and conduct, when the tie between them has been once broken. And therefore there will always be many well-meaning people who say: Why meddle with religion at all? why run the risk of breaking a tie which it is so hard to join again? And the risk is not to be run lightly, and one is not always to attack people's illusions about religion merely because illusions they are. But at the present moment two things about the Christian religion must surely be clear to anybody with eyes in his head. One is, that men cannot do without it; the other, that they cannot do with it as it is.

And first, that they cannot do without it is shown by the certainty,—as Baur, with whom I am glad to agree at last, well says,—by the certainty with which 'the predominance of an all-denying unbelief does but call forth a keener craving for belief.'[1] Nowhere did the old Christian belief seem to be so reasoned down, laughed out of court, exploded and extinct as in France; and in no country do we witness such a recrudescence, as liberals would say, of superstition, so formidable a clerical reaction. In England the old Christian belief has never ceased to be a mighty power. Yet even here the voice of modern liberalism has of late more and more been raised to decry it and to foretell its speedy extinction; and the astonishing popularity of the

[1] 'Die Herrschaft eines alles verneinenden Unglaubens ruft nur ein um so heisseres Glaubensverlangen hervor.'

American revivalists is the answer. Why is this so?

It is so, because throughout the world there is a growing feeling, that, whatever may have been amiss with the old religion, modern liberalism, though it confidently professed to have perfect and sufficient substitutes for it, has not; and though it promised to make the world get on without it, cannot. Even Frenchmen are losing their long-cherished belief in the gospel of the rights of man and the ideas of 1789 as a substitute for it. Indeed, one has only to keep one's head clear and one's judgment impartial, to see that however poorly men may have got on when their governing idea was: *The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom*, they can get on even less by the governing idea that *all men are born naturally free and equal.* The barrenness and insufficiency of the revolutionary formulas are visible to common sense as they lose the gloss of novelty. Either they are vague;—as when Michelet, for instance, talks of 'my idea, and Proudhon's, of Justice, of Revolution, an idea the opposite of Christianity'; where the term *Christianity* has no doubt a plain enough meaning for us, but the terms *Justice* and *Revolution*, its supposed opposites, have not. Or if the formula is explained, it turns out to be something jejune, after all, which is meant;—as when Michelet tells us what Justice, the *pensée du siècle*, the thought of the Age of Revolution,

the opposite of Christianity, is, and it is this: 'Unity of administration, gradual suppression of privilege, equal taxation.' But this is politics, it is merely what we call *machinery;* and the 'thought of the age,' the idea of Justice and Revolution, the idea which is the opposite of Christianity, must give us something more than this, or to replace Christianity it is quite ludicrously insufficient.

All this most people are now beginning to see clearly enough; hence the reaction on which secularists so little counted. But indeed it is much more surprising that they should ever have reckoned that their ideas of revolution and liberty, and of the spread of physical science dispelling a host of illusions, could at all do for the world what Christianity had done for it and serve as a substitute for Christianity, than that they should now find themselves to be out in their reckoning. For Christianity enabled, or professed to enable, mankind to deal with personal conduct,—with an immense matter, at least three-fourths of human life. And it seems strange that people should even imagine, either that men will not demand something enabling them to do this, or that revolution, and equality, and knowing that not the sky moves but the earth, can in any way do it. And so the revolutionists find themselves at fault in their calculations; and the best scientific specialists are forward to confess, what is evident enough, both

that religion must and will have its claims attended to, and that physics and religion have, as Joubert says, absolutely nothing to do with one another. Charlatans may bluster; but, speaking in defence of the genuine men of science, M. Réville declares of them that 'they willingly recognise the legitimateness of the religious element in the human spirit, but they say that to provide the satisfaction due to it is not a business with which they are competent to deal.' [1]

It is true, all specialists are not equally sober-minded. Thus we find a brilliant mathematician, Professor Clifford, launching invectives which, if they are just, would prove either that no religion at all has any right to mankind's regard, or that the Christian religion, at all events, has none. He calls Christianity 'that awful plague which has destroyed two civilisations and but barely failed to slay such promise of good as is now struggling to live amongst men.' He warns his fellow-men against showing any tenderness to 'the slender remnant of a system which has made its red mark on history and still lives to threaten mankind.' 'The grotesque forms of its intellectual belief,' he sternly adds, by way of finish, 'have survived the discredit of its moral teaching.'

[1] 'Ils reconnaissent volontiers la légitimité de l'élément religieux de l'esprit humain; mais ils disent qu'il ne rentre pas dans leur compétence de lui fournir les satisfactions qu'il réclame.'

But these are merely the crackling fireworks of youthful paradox. One reads it all, half sighing, half smiling, as the declamation of a clever and confident youth, with the hopeless inexperience, irredeemable by any cleverness, of his age. Only when one is young and headstrong can one thus prefer bravado to experience, can one stand by the Sea of Time, and instead of listening to the solemn and rhythmical beat of its waves, choose to fill the air with one's own whoopings to start the echo. But the mass of plain people hear such talk with impatient indignation, and flock all the more eagerly to Messrs. Moody and Sankey. They feel that the brilliant freethinker and revolutionist talks about their religion and yet is all abroad in it, does not know either that or the great facts of human life; and they go to those who know them better. And the plain people are not wrong. Compared with Professor Clifford, Messrs. Moody and Sankey are masters of the philosophy of history. Men are not mistaken in thinking that Christianity has done them good, in loving it, in wishing to listen to those who will talk to them about what they love, and will talk of it with admiration and gratitude, not contempt and hatred. Christianity is truly, as in *Literature and Dogma* I have called it, 'the greatest and happiest stroke ever yet made for human perfection.' Men do not err, they are on firm ground of experience, when they say that they have

practically found Christianity to be something incomparably beneficent. Where they err, is in their way of accounting for this, and of assigning its causes.

And here we reach our second point: that men cannot do with Christianity as it is. Something true and beneficent they have got hold of in it, they know; and they want to rely upon this, and to use it. But what men rely upon and use, they seek to give themselves account of, they seek to make clear its right to be relied upon and used. Now, the old ways of accounting for Christianity, of establishing the ground of its claims upon us, no longer serve as they once did. Men's experience widens, they get to know the world better, to know the mental history of mankind better; they distinguish more clearly between history and legend, they grow more shy of recourse to the preternatural. I have quoted in the present volume the saying of Pascal: 'In good truth, the world is getting mistrustful, and does not believe things unless they are evident to it.'[1] But no one can more set this consideration at defiance than does Pascal himself in his account of Christianity. Gleams of astonishing insight he has, as well as bursts of unsurpassable eloquence; there is no writer on the Christian religion who more than Pascal deserves a close study. But the basis of his

[1] 'En vérité, le monde devient méfiant, et ne croit les choses que quand il les voit.'

whole system is the acceptance, as positive history and literal matter of fact, of the story of Adam's fall. The historical difficulty of taking this legend seriously, for us so decisive, Pascal hardly saw at all; but he saw plenty of other difficulty. Nothing, he observes, can be 'more contrary to the rules of our miserable justice than to damn eternally a child born now for a crime committed six thousand years before he came into being.' Nevertheless Pascal accepts the story, because 'without this mystery, the most incomprehensible of all mysteries, we are incomprehensible to ourselves.' That is, he sees no other way of explaining the mixture of grandeur and infirmity which he finds in man, —of desire for happiness and of inability to reach it. So that, if we put ourselves under Pascal's guidance, the necessary approach to our use of the salvation offered by the Christian religion is to believe the story of Adam's fall to be historical, and literally true. And his famous figure of the wager is used by Pascal to reconcile us the better to this belief. The chances are such, he says, that we shall do well at all events to lay our stake in favour of the story's truth. If we say we *cannot* believe it, let us set to work to attain belief as others have attained it; and how was this? 'By acting just as if they *did* believe it; by taking holy water, having masses said, etc.; *quite naturally that will make you believe, and render you*

stupid![1]—But that is just what I am afraid of. —And why; what have you to lose? What harm will come to you from taking this course? You will be faithful, honest, humble, grateful, charitable, sincere, a friend whom men can trust?'

Did ever a great reasoner reason so madly? And this is the man who saw that the world no longer believes things unless it has evidence of them! In the first place, there is no evidence that man is only comprehensible on the assumption that the story of Adam's fall is true. But even if it were so, man must still ask himself: *Is* the story true? And if it is not true, then the conclusion must be simply that man is not comprehensible. Now, sooner or later, as our experience widens, we must see that the story is not true; we must inevitably come to say to ourselves: 'It is all a legend! it never really happened, any of it!' It is no more real history than the Peruvian account of Manco Capac and Mama Ocollo, the children of the Sun, 'who appeared on the banks of the Lake Titicaca, sent by their beneficent parent, who beheld with pity

[1] '*Naturellement même cela vous fera croire et vous abêtira.*' The Port Royal editors suppressed this wonderful sentence, and indeed the whole passage which follows the words *and how was this?* What Port Royal substituted was the following: 'Imitez leurs actions extérieures, si vous ne pouvez encore entrer dans leurs dispositions intérieures; quittez ces vains amusements qui vous occupent tout entier.' Pascal's words were not restored until M. Cousin reverted to the original manuscript. See M. Havet's careful and valuable edition of Pascal's *Pensées*, vol. i. pp. 152, 158.

the miseries of the human race, to instruct and to reclaim them.'[1] For a little while, even for a generation or two perhaps, man may, after he has begun to doubt the story's truth, still keep himself in the belief of it by 'taking holy water, rendering himself stupid'; but the time comes when he cannot. That a story will account for certain facts, that we wish to think it true, nay, that many have formerly thought it true and have grown faithful, humble, charitable, and so on, by thus doing, does not make the story true if it is not, and cannot prevent men after a certain time from seeing that it is not.

And on such a time we are now entering. The more we may have been helped to be faithful, humble and charitable by taking the truth of this story, and others equally legendary, for granted, the greater is our embarrassment, no doubt, at having to do without them. But we have to do without them none the less on that account. We may feel our hearts still vibrate in answer to the Old Testament telling us that 'the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom,' and to the New telling us that Jesus Christ saves his people from their sins. But this fear of the Lord, and this safety through Jesus Christ, can have Adam's fall for their fundamental basis and explanation no longer.

Cardinal Manning narrates the miraculous resuscitation of the Virgin Mary, and his

[1] Robertson's *History of America*, book vi.

argument for believing it is that the story is a beautiful one, and that it is a comfort and help to pious souls to think it true. Both may be freely conceded to him; but really as much may be said for the miraculous apparition of Cinderella's fairy godmother. The story is pathetic and beautiful, and it is a pleasure to kind souls to see the tables turned by enchantment in favour of the poor little good Cinderella. But this does not make the story true. And if a story is unsubstantial in its foundation and character, no connecting of it with our affections, or with what does us good, can in the end prevent people from saying: 'But it is not true! it never really happened, any of it!'

I heard Mr. Moody preach to one of his vast audiences on a topic eternally attractive,—salvation by Jesus Christ. Mr. Moody's account of that salvation was exactly the old story, to which I have often adverted, of the contract in the Council of the Trinity. Justice puts in her claim, said Mr. Moody, for the punishment of guilty mankind; God admits it. Jesus intercedes, undertakes to bear their punishment, and signs an undertaking to that effect. Thousands of years pass; Jesus is on the cross on Calvary. Justice appears, and presents to him his signed undertaking. Jesus accepts it, bows his head, and expires. Christian salvation consists in the undoubting belief in the transaction here

described, and in the hearty acceptance of the release offered by it.

Never let us deny to this story power and pathos, or treat with hostility ideas which have entered so deep into the life of Christendom. But the story is not true; it never really happened. These personages never did meet together, and speak, and act, in the manner related. The personages of the Christian Heaven and their conversations are no more matter of fact than the personages of the Greek Olympus and their conversations. Sir Robert Phillimore seeks to tie up the Church of England to a belief in the personality of Satan, and he might as well seek to tie it up to a belief in the personality of Tisiphone. Satan and Tisiphone are alike not real persons, but shadows thrown by man's guilt and terrors. Mr. Moody's audiences are the last people who will come to perceive all this; they are chiefly made up from the main body of lovers of our popular religion,—the serious and steady middle class, with its bounded horizons. To the more educated class above this, and to the more free class below it, the grave beliefs of the religious middle class in such stories as Mr. Moody's story of the Covenant of Redemption are impossible now; to the religious middle class itself they will be impossible soon. Salvation by Jesus Christ, therefore, if it has any reality, must be placed somewhere else than in a hearty consent to Mr. Moody's story. Something

Mr. Moody and his hearers have experienced from Jesus, let us own, which does them good; but of this something they have not yet succeeded in getting the right history.

Now, if one feels impatience with people who, like Professor Clifford, lightly run a-muck at an august thing, so a man who is in earnest must feel impatience with those who lightly allege this or that as the true foundation of it. People who gravely offer us about Christianity their stories of the contract in the Council of the Trinity, or of the miraculous resuscitation of the Virgin, are just like Mr. Ruskin telling us in his assured way: 'There is not a moment of any day of our lives, when nature is not producing picture after picture and working still upon such exquisite and constant principles of such perfect beauty, *that it is quite certain it is all done for us, and intended for our perpetual pleasure.*' It is *not* quite certain, we have not a particle of certainty about it, and to say that it is certain is utterly fantastic. However, Mr. Ruskin is talking only about the beauties of nature; and here, perhaps, it is an excuse for inventing certainties that what one invents is so beautiful. But religion is to govern our life. Whoever produces certainties to us on the subject of religion is bound to take care that they are serious ones; and yet on no subject is this so little regarded.

And there is no doubt that we touch here on

a real fault both in Christians and in Christian theology; and that at Christianity's very first start in the world the heathen philosopher Celsus hit this fault, when he remarked on the κουφότης τῶν Χριστιανῶν. We must not translate κουφότης simply *levity*, for the seriousness of Christianity in morals has been its charm and its power. Ὅσα σεμνά! as St. Paul says,[1]—*whatever things are nobly serious!*—may here well stand for its motto. But the κουφότης Celsus meant was *a want of intellectual seriousness;* and the reproach of this was not altogether undeserved by the first Christians, while it has been abundantly deserved by Christian theology since. The first Christians misunderstood Jesus and had the multitude's appetite for miracles, the multitude's inexact observation and boundless credulity. They it was who supplied the data which Christian theology took from them without question, and has ever since confidently built upon. But trained, critical, indifferent minds, which knew what evidence was and what popular beliefs were, could not but be struck with the looseness in the joints of the Christian belief, with the slightness of evidence for its miraculous data. They *were* struck with them; and if the old civilisation had not been on the wane, if a supply of instructed, critical, cool, indifferent minds had continued, Christianity could not have established itself in the precise

[1] Philippians iv. 8.

form it did. For its establishment in that form the extinction of the old civilisation was necessary;—to flood and drown all which this civilisation was, and thought, and knew, with the barbarian nations of the north, men of infantine and untrained mental habit. The infancy of the world was renewed, with all its sweet illusions; and on this new world the popular Christian belief could lay hold freely. Professor Clifford execrates Christianity as an 'awful plague,' because its success thus involved the ruin of Roman civilisation. It was worth while to have that civilisation ruined fifty times over, for the sake of planting Christianity through Europe in the only form in which it could then be planted there. Civilisation could build itself up again; but what Christianity had to give, and from the first did give in no small measure, was indispensable, and the Roman civilisation could not give it. And Christianity's admixture of popular legend and illusion was sure to be cleared away with time, according to that profound saying of Jesus himself: 'There is nothing covered which shall not be uncovered, and hidden which shall not be known.'[1]

But the miraculous data supplied by the first Christians became in this manner speedily consecrated, the looseness of the evidence for them soon escaped scrutiny. Theology, the exhibition of Christianity in a scientific and systematic way,

[1] Matthew x. 26.

took these data as an assured basis. Many theologians have been very able men, and their reasonings and deductions have been very close and subtle. Still they have always had the defect of going seriously upon data produced and admitted with a *want of intellectual seriousness*. But science makes her progress, not merely by close reasoning and deduction, but also, and much more, by the close scrutiny and correction of the present commonly received data. And this scrutiny is just what theological science has never seriously given; and to listen to it, therefore, is, as we said in *Literature and Dogma*, like listening to Cosmas Indicopleustes the Christian cosmographer, or any other early Christian writer in a department of science, who goes upon data furnished by a time of imperfect observation and boundless credulity. Whatever acuteness the writer may manifest, yet upon these data he goes. And Christian writers in other departments of science have now corrected their old data in them from top to bottom; half of these data they have clean abandoned and the other half they have transformed. But Christian theologians have not yet done so in their science of theology, and hence their unprofitableness.

Mr. Gladstone complains that objectors to the Athanasian Creed seem to forget, most of them, 'that theology is a science, and that it therefore has a technical language which is liable to be grossly misunderstood by those who have never

made it the subject of study.' And this is a very usual complaint from our theologians. But the fact is, that their science is a science going gravely and confidingly upon the uncorrected data of a time of imperfect observation and boundless credulity, and that, therefore, the more formal and technical it gets, the more hollow it is. And the hollowness of the results exhibited by theologians is more apparent than the reason thereof, and a clear-headed man can often perceive that what the theologians say is futile, although he may never have been led to see that the untrustworthiness of their miraculous data is the real cause. Dr. Littledale adjures people to 'study theology, instead of practically maintaining, as Dr. Arnold in all sincerity did, that the best preparation for laying down authoritative decisions in theology is to know nothing whatever about it.' But Dr. Arnold, who had a sound historical instinct, could tell at once, from the warnings of this instinct, that theology, which is a series of conclusions upon the history in the Bible, had apprehended that history all wrong ; that it was faulty, therefore, in its very base, and so could not be a true theology, a science of the Christian religion, at all. And most certainly it is not the best preparation for forming right judgments in a true theology, to have one's head stuffed full of a false.

Moreover, this original vice of Christian theology seems to have affected, where things

religious are concerned, the whole mental habit of those who receive it, and to have afflicted them with a malady which cannot be better described than as the *κουφότης τῶν Χριστιανῶν, want of intellectual seriousness* on the part of lovers and defenders of Christianity. Men's experience widens, they get a clearer sense of what fact is and what proof is, they are more aware when they talk nonsense and more shy of talking it; only where religion is concerned does this check of sober reason seem quite to desert them, and levity to reign. We have noticed Cardinal Manning's ground for believing the miraculous resuscitation of the Virgin Mary: that the story is so beautiful. But the same levity is shown by more cautious Catholics discussing the Pope's infallibility, seeking to limit its extent, to lay down in what sense he is really infallible and in what sense he is not; for in no sense whatever is or can he be infallible, and to debate the thing at all shows a want of intellectual seriousness. The same when Lord Herries thinks to mend matters by saying, that 'the Pope is the organ of the Church, and an Almighty Power of infinite wisdom and of infinite truth established his Church to teach all truth unto the end of the world, and as such that Church must be infallible'; for there is plainly no such thing existing as the said infallible Church, and it is a want of intellectual seriousness to make believe that there is when there is not. The same when

Dr. Ward thinks to clear the doctrine of the Real Presence, by talking of 'the divine substance in the Host separable from all that group of visible and tangible phenomena which suggest the presence of bread.' All that this acute mind effects, by thus gravely cheating itself with words, is to illustrate the κουφότης τῶν Χριστιανῶν, the want of intellectual seriousness found in Christians. The same, finally, when Mr. Moody, the question being what Christian salvation positively is, tells us his story about Justice and her contract. However honest and earnest Mr. Moody may be, all we can say of a man who at the present juncture bases Christian salvation on a story like that, is that he shows a fatal want of intellectual seriousness.

For Protestantism has the same want of intellectual seriousness as Catholicism, its advantage being, however, that it more possesses in itself the means of deliverance. On this, the advantage of Protestantism, we do not at the present moment insist; we rather point out the weakness, common to it and to Catholicism, of building confidently upon miraculous data lightly admitted. True, Catholicism has more levity in admitting new miraculous data; but Protestantism admits unreservedly one set of miraculous data and builds everything on them, because they are written in a book which, it says, cannot err; and this is levity. At the stage of experience where men are now arrived, it is

evident to whoever looks at things fairly that the miraculous data of the Bible have not this unique character of trustworthiness; that they, like other such data, proceed from a medium of imperfect observation and boundless credulity. The story of the magical birth and resuscitation of Jesus was bred in such a medium; and not to see this, to build confidently on the story, is hardly more serious than to admit the story of the magical birth and resuscitation of the Virgin because it is so beautiful.

It is of the utmost importance to be perfectly honest here. M. de Laveleye[1] is struck, as any judicious Catholic may well be struck, with the superior freedom, order, stability, and even religious earnestness, of the Protestant nations as compared with the Catholic. But at the present moment the Protestant nations are living partly upon their past, partly upon their powers of self-transformation; great care is required to consult and use aright the experience which they offer. True, their religion has made them what they are, and their religion involved severance from Rome and involved the received Protestant theology. But it would be a grave mistake to suppose that the secret of the Protestant nations lies in severance from Rome and in the received Protestant theology; or that, in now merely adopting those from them, a modern nation

[1] See his excellent pamphlet: *Le Protestantisme et le Catholicisme*, Brussels, Muquardt.

could find freedom, order, stability, and religious earnestness. The true force of Protestantism was its signal return to the individual conscience,—to the method of Jesus. This strengthened the man, this founded him on rock, this invigorated his action on all lines. It induced separation from Rome (so far as this was not due to causes political), and it induced the received Protestant theology. But a man's conscience does not necessarily tell him right on all points all at once; and now the conscience of the Protestant nations is beginning to tell them that in their theology of the sixteenth century it did not tell them right. Conscience told them right in asserting its own general supremacy as ultimate court of appeal; it did not tell them right in its particular decision that the sixteenth century theology was the true one. Protestantism's secret is undoubtedly its religion; but it has not at this moment a science of religion, or theology, to give to the Catholic nations, for it is working out its own anew. What it has to give them is the sincere, uncompromising return to the method of Jesus, with the deep and firm sense of reality which this return inspires. But if it gives them this, it will have given to the Catholic nations what enables them to do all the rest for themselves.

It is the habit of increased intellectual seriousness, bred of a wider experience and of a larger acquaintance with men's mental history, which

is now transforming religion in our country. Intelligent people among the educated classes grow more and more sceptical of the miraculous data which supply the basis for our received theology. The habit is a conquest of the advancing human race; it spreads and spreads; it cannot but be, and will be, on the whole and in the end a boon to us. But many and many an individual it may find unprepared for it, and may act upon him injuriously. Goethe's saying is well known: 'All which merely frees our spirit, without giving us the command over ourselves, is deleterious.'[1] It is of small use by itself alone, however it may be indispensable, this one single current of intellectual seriousness; of small use to those who are untouched by the great current of seriousness about conduct. To a frivolous and sensual upper class, to a raw and sensual lower class, to feel the greater current may be more than a compensation for not feeling the lesser. They do now feel the lesser current, however; and it removes them farther than ever from the influence of the greater.

For fear of losing their religious convictions, the pious part of our people would fain shut off from themselves the intellectual current, which they fear might carry them away to shores of desolation. They may succeed for

[1] 'Alles was unsern Geist befreit, ohne uns die Herrschaft über uns selbst zu geben, ist verderblich.'

a longer or a shorter time. Their love of the old, and their fear of the new, alike give them energy; and we have repeatedly said that the nature of the debate as to the miraculous ground in Christianity is such, that the conviction of its unsoundness must form itself in a man's own mind, it cannot be forced upon him from without. It is true, what apologists are always urging, that there is no other example of such a success as that of the Christian religion, where the successful religion had an erroneous belief in miracles for its foundation. It is true, what was well pointed out in the *Guardian*, that the rich crop of non-Christian miracles contemporary with the rise of Christianity, and which is often brought as proof of the hollowness of the Christian miracles, may naturally have been called up by the miracles of Christianity. The answer, no doubt, is, that no other religion with an unsound foundation of miracles has succeeded like Christianity, because no other religion had, in close conjunction with its unsound belief in miracles, such an element of soundness as the personality and word of Jesus. And the suggestion of non-Christian miracles by the Christian ones only proves a superior force somewhere in the Christian religion; and this it undoubtedly had, but not from its miracles. However, a religious man may still shut his eyes to all this, and may keep fast his old faith in the Christian

miracles. But before very long the habit of intellectual seriousness will reach him also, and change him. Not a few religious people are even now gained by it against their will, and to their deep distress and bewilderment. So that, whether we look about us at the religious world or at the irreligious, the conclusion is the same; people cannot any longer do with Christianity just as it is.

The reader whom the present work has in view is not the man still striving to be content with the received theology. With him we do not seek to meddle. Neither is it intended for a frivolous upper class in their religious insensibility, nor for a raw lower class in their religious insensibility, nor for Liberal secularists at home or abroad, nor for Catholics who are strangers, or very nearly so, to the Bible. Some or all of these may perhaps come to find the work useful to them one day, and after they have undergone a change; but it is not directly aimed at them. It is meant for those who, won by the modern spirit to habits of intellectual seriousness, cannot receive what sets these habits at nought, and will not try to force themselves to do so; but who have stood near enough to the Christian religion to feel the attraction which a thing so very great, when one stands really near to it, cannot but exercise, and who have some acquaintance with the Bible and some practice in using it.

Of such persons there are in this country, and probably in America also, not a few. The familiarity with the Bible extends in Protestant countries throughout those large classes which have been religiously brought up, and is invaluable to them. It is the excellent fruit which Protestantism gained by its return at the Reformation to the individual conscience,—to the method of Jesus. The Bible itself was made the standard, and what the Bible really said. It matters not that the Protestant's actual interpretation of the Bible has hitherto been little better than the Catholic's; he has still been conversant with the Bible, has felt its grandeur, has conceived the just idea that in its right use is salvation. M. Sainte-Beuve, the finest critical spirit of our times, conceived of the Bible so falsely, simply from not knowing it, that he could cheerfully and confidently repeat the Liberal formula: 'Unless we mean to prefer Byzantinism to progress we must say good-bye *aux vieilles Bibles*,—to the old Bibles.' Liberals, who think that religion in general is an obstacle to progress, may naturally, however, be ignorant of the virtue there is in knowing one's Bible. But Catholics, although they may love religion, are for the most part in like case with its Liberal foes in not being aware what virtue there lies in knowing the Bible. And therefore a Catholic,

who has once come to perceive the want of intellectual seriousness in what his Church lays down, and in what he has been told of her infallibility, thinks that there the thing ends, and that the Christian religion itself has as little intellectual seriousness as the dogmas of his Church. So we see how many Catholics break violently with religion altogether, and become its sworn enemies. And even with Catholics who have been so near to it that they cannot help feeling its attraction, what they feel is merely, when the dogmas of their church have lost credibility for them, a vague sentiment at variance with their reason ; capable, perhaps, of making them view with dislike all who raise questions about religion, but not capable of affording them any sure stay. Therefore Niebuhr might well say that 1517 ought to precede 1789 ; and even the fanaticism of Exeter Hall can hardly assert too roundly that the Catholic nations will never really improve until they know the Bible better. For easily and always does a religious Protestant remain aware that religion is not at an end because the dogmas of a church cannot stand. He knows that the Bible is behind ; and although he may be startled on first hearing that what creeds and confessions have for centuries been giving as the sum and substance of the Bible is not its sum and substance, yet he knows the vastness and depth of the Bible well

enough to understand that, after all, this may very likely be quite true.

For such a reader is the present work meant; —for a reader who is conversant with the Bible, who can feel the attraction of the Christian religion, but who has acquired habits of intellectual seriousness, has been revolted by having things presented solemnly to him for his use which will not hold water, and who will start with none of such things even to reach what he values. If there are but ten people in the world who deal with religion fairly, he is resolved to be one of those ten.

It is the aim of the present volume, as it was the aim of *Literature and Dogma*, to show to such a man that his honesty will be rewarded. Plenty of people there are who labour solely for the diffusion of habits of intellectual seriousness, at whatever cost. Perhaps they do well, perhaps ill; at all events I do not, in the present volume and in its predecessor, write as one of them. I write to convince the lover of religion that by following habits of intellectual seriousness he need not, so far as religion is concerned, lose anything. Taking the Old Testament as Israel's magnificent establishment of the theme: *Righteousness is salvation!* taking the New as the perfect elucidation by Jesus of what righteousness is and how salvation is won, I do not fear comparing even the power over the soul and imagination of the Bible, taken in this sense,—

a sense which is at the same time solid,—with the like power in the old materialistic and miraculous sense for the Bible, which is not.

The solidity itself is indeed an immense element of grandeur. *To him that ordereth his conversation right shall be shown the salvation of God!* Or conversely, and in modern phrase: *Nations and men, whoever is shipwrecked, is shipwrecked on conduct!* In vain do philosophical Radicals devise fine new programmes which leave it out; in vain does France trumpet the ideas of '89 which are to do instead. Whoever leaves it out of his programme, whoever fancies that anything else will do instead, is baffled and confounded by the sure event; experience keeps again and again sending him back to learn better, like a schoolboy with an ill-got lesson. France, which was in such terror of Byzantinism and so resolved to have done with 'the old Bibles,' France, with all her eminent social instincts and gifts, is she not, in her forty and fifty editions of M. Adolphe Belot's novels, faring towards the real Byzantinism, a Byzantinism from which 'the old Bibles,' perhaps, can alone save her? For, as it is true that men are shipwrecked on conduct, so it is true that the Bible is the great means for making men feel this, and for saving them. It makes them feel it by the irresistible power with which Israel, the Seer of the Vision of Peace, testifies it; it saves them by the method and secret of Jesus.

The indispensableness of the Bible and of Christianity, therefore, cannot be exaggerated. In morals, which are at least three-fourths of life, to do without them is, as was said in *Literature and Dogma*, exactly like doing in æsthetics without the art of Greece. To do with 'the commonplaces of morality couched in modern and congenial language,' which is what some of our Liberal friends propose, answers precisely to doing with English, French, and German art in æsthetics. To do with the very best and finest, in the way of morals, that has outside the Bible been produced, answers to doing, in æsthetics, with Flemish and Italian art. Every lover of art knows that perfection in art, salvation in art, will never be thus reached, will never be reached without knowing Greece. So it is with perfection and salvation in conduct, men's universal concern, *the way of peace;* they are not to be reached without the Bible and Christianity. By the Bible and Christianity, though not by what our missionaries now offer as such, the non-Christian nations will finally be won, and will come to regard their old religions much as a Christian, wide-minded, reverent, and profound, would regard them now. So will be fulfilled the word of Israel's Eternal: *My house shall be called the house of prayer for all nations; there shall be one Eternal, and his name one.*[1] And although we may willingly allow to Professor

[1] Isaiah lvi. 7; Zechariah xiv. 9.

Rauwenhoff that the mind and life of our Aryan race has deeply modified the religion of Semitic Israel already, and will yet modify it much more, still that cannot prevent the root of the matter for us, in this immense concern of religion, being in the Israel of the Bible, and he is our spiritual progenitor:—*A Syrian ready to perish was thy father.*[1]

Thus neither in respect of the grandeur of the Bible and Christianity, nor in respect of their world-wide importance, will the lover of religion, who brings habits of intellectual seriousness to bear upon them, find that he has to change his notions. Nor will he even have to revolutionise his phraseology. He will be aware, indeed, that of the constitution of God we know nothing, and that those who, like Christian philosophers in general, begin by admitting this, and who add, even, that 'we are utterly powerless to conceive or comprehend the idea of an infinite Being, Almighty, All-knowing, Omnipotent, and Eternal, of whose inscrutable purpose the material universe is the unexplained manifestation,'[2] but then proceed calmly to affirm such a Being as positively as if he were a man they were acquainted with in the next street, talk idly. Nevertheless, admitting that all this cannot be affirmed about the God of our religion, but only that our God is the Eternal not our-

[1] Deuteronomy xxvi. 5.
[2] Mr. R. A. Proctor, in the *Contemporary Review*.

selves that makes for righteousness, we yet know also that men inevitably use anthropomorphic language about whatever makes them feel deeply, and the Biblical language about God we may therefore freely use, but as approximative and poetical merely. To seek to discard, like some philosophers, the name of God and to substitute for it such a name as the Unknowable, will seem to a plain man, surely, ridiculous. For *God*, — the name which has so engaged all men's feelings,—is at the same time by its very derivation a positive name, expressing that which is the most blessed of boons to man, Light; whereas *Unknowable* is a name merely negative. And no man could ever have cared anything about God in so far as he is simply unknowable. 'The Unknowable is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble,' is what would occur to no man to think or say. Men cared about God for the sake of what they knew about him, not of what they did not. And they knew about him that he was the Eternal not ourselves that makes for righteousness, and as such they gave him that name for what gives light and warmth, *God*. It adds, indeed, to our awe of God that although we are able to know of him what so greatly concerns us, we know of him nothing more; but simply to be able to know nothing of him could beget in us no awe whatever.

Finally, he who most seizes the real signifi-

cance of the Bible and of Jesus, will be least disposed to cut himself off in religion from his fellow-men, to renounce all participation in their religious language and worship. True, this language is approximative merely while men imagine it to be adequate; it is *thrown out* at certain realities which they very imperfectly comprehend. It is materialised poetry, which they give as science; and there can be no worse science than materialised poetry. But poetry is essentially concrete; and the moment one perceives that the religious language of the human race is in truth poetry, which it mistakes for science, one cannot make it an objection to this language that it is concrete. That it has long moved and deeply engaged the affections of men, that the Christian generations before us have all passed that way, adds immensely to its worth as poetry. As the Catholic architecture, so the Catholic worship is likely to survive and prevail, long after the intellectual childishness of Catholic dogma, and the political and social mischiefs of the Roman system, have tired out men's patience with them. Catholic worship is likely, however modified, to survive as the general worship of Christians, because it is the worship which, in a sphere where poetry is permissible and natural, unites the most of the elements of poetry.

Everything turns on its being at realities that this worship and its language are aimed.

Its anthropomorphic language about God is aimed at a vast, though ill-apprehended, reality. So is its materialistic language about the death, the rising again, and the reign of Christ. Baur says that the important thing is not whether Jesus really rose from the dead or no; the important thing is, Baur says, that his disciples believed him to have risen. Mr. Appleton, in a just and instructive review of the labours of Strauss, invites our approval for Strauss's early position that what is best in Christianity was not due to the individual Jesus, but was developed by the religious consciousness of humanity. But the religious consciousness of humanity has produced in Christianity not ideas, but imaginations; and it is ideas, not imaginations, which endure. The religious consciousness of humanity produced the doctrines of the Incarnation and of the Real Presence,—beautiful imaginations, but if Christianity depended upon them it would dissolve. It will live, because it depends upon a true and inexhaustibly fruitful idea, the idea of death and resurrection as conceived and worked out by Jesus. *Baptized into Christ's death, if by any means we might attain to the resurrection from the dead,*[1] is the true, the just, the only adequate account of a Christian and his religion. The importance of the disciples' belief in their Master's resurrection lay in their believing what was true, although they materialised

[1] Romans vi. 3; Philippians iii. 11.

it. Jesus *had* died and risen again, but in his own sense not theirs. The strength of the Christian religion lies in its being founded on a truth; on a truth which hitherto Christendom has been able to apprehend only by materialising it, but which it will one day apprehend better, and which men could come to apprehend better only by passing through a materialistic stage. We can use their language because it is thrown out at an admirable truth; only it is not, as they suppose, their sense for their own language which is real while our sense is figurative, but it is our sense which is real, and theirs is merely figurative..

The freethinking of one age is the commonsense of the next, and the Christian world will certainly learn to transform beliefs which it now thinks to be untransformable. The way will be found. And the new Christianity will call forth more effort in the individual who uses it than the old, will require more open and instructed minds for its reception; and this is progress. But we live at the beginning of a great transition which cannot well be accomplished without confusion and distress. I do not pretend to operate a general change of religious opinion, such as can only come to pass through the operation of many labourers working, all of them, towards a like end, and by the instrumentality, in a very considerable degree, of the clergy. *One man's life, what is it?* says

Goethe; but even one man in his short term may do something to ease a severe transition, to diminish violent shocks in it and bitter pain. With this end in view, I have addressed myself to men such as are happily not rare in this country, men of free and active minds, who, though they may be profoundly dissatisfied with the received theology, are yet interested in religion and more or less acquainted with the Bible. These I have endeavoured to help; and they, if they are helped, will in their turn help others. To one country and nation, and to one sort of persons in it, and to one moment in its religious history, have I addressed myself; and if the attempt thus confessedly partial has even a partial success, I am enough rewarded. May even that partial success be looked for? A calmer and a more gradual judgment than that of the immediate present will decide. But however that judgment may go, whether it pronounce the attempt here made to be of solid worth or not, I have little fear but that it will recognise it to have been an attempt conservative, and an attempt religious.

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GOD AND THE BIBLE

INTRODUCTION

MODERN SCEPTICISM will not allow us to rely either on the Epistle of Polycarp, or on the narrative of his martyrdom, as certainly authentic. Nevertheless, a saying from the latter we will venture to use. As Polycarp stood in the amphitheatre at Smyrna just before his martyrdom, with the heathen multitude around crying out against him as an atheistical innovator, the Roman proconsul, pitying his great age, begged him to pronounce the formulas which expressed adherence to the popular religion and abhorrence of Christianity. 'Swear,' said he, 'by the fortune of Cæsar; cry: *Away with the atheists!*' Whereupon Polycarp, says the letter of the Church of Smyrna which relates his martyrdom, looking round with a severe countenance upon the heathen clamourers who filled the amphitheatre, pointed to these with his hand, and with a groan, and casting up his eyes to heaven, cried: 'Away with the Atheists!'

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This did not give satisfaction, and Polycarp was burnt.

Yet so completely has the so-called atheism of Polycarp prevailed, that we are almost puzzled at finding it called atheism by the popular religion of its own day, by the worshippers of Jupiter and Cybele, of Rome and the fortune of Cæsar. On the other hand, Polycarp's retort upon these worshippers, his flinging back upon their religion the name of atheism, seems to us the most natural thing in the world. And so most certainly will it be with the popular religion of our own day. Confident in its traditions and imaginations, this religion now cries out against those who pronounce them vain: *Away with the atheists!* just as the heathen populace of Asia cried out against Polycarp. With a groan, and casting up his eyes to Heaven, the critic thus execrated might well, like Polycarp, point to his execrators and retort: *Away with the Atheists!* So deeply unsound is the mass of traditions and imaginations of which popular religion consists, so gross a distortion and caricature of the true religion does it present, that future times will hardly comprehend its audacity in calling those who abjure it atheists; while its being stigmatised itself with this hard name will astonish no one.

Let us who criticise the popular theology, however, show a moderation of which our adversaries do not always set us the example.

We may not indeed, like the *Times* newspaper, call this established theology 'an English, a Protestant, and a reasonable religion.' But let us never forget that it professes, as we ourselves have again and again repeated, along with all its pseudo-science and all its popular legend, the main doctrine of the Bible: the pre-eminence of righteousness and the method and secret of Jesus;—professes it and in some degree uses it. Let us never forget that our quarrel with its pseudo-science and its popular legend is because they endanger this main doctrine, this saving truth, on which our popular religion has in some degree hold. Let us gladly admit that the advance of time and of knowledge has even begun to shake the overweening confidence of our established theology in its own pseudo-science and popular legend, and that its replies to the impugner of them, if still too apt to be intemperate, are yet fast freeing themselves from the insolence and invective of thirty years ago. The strictures on *Literature and Dogma* have certainly not been mild; yet, on the whole, their moderation has surprised me. An exception ought to be made, perhaps, for the *Dublin Review*. But an Englishman should always ask himself with shame: If Irish Catholicism is provincial in its violence and virulence, whose fault is it?

To retort, therefore, upon those who have attacked *Literature and Dogma* as anti-christian

and anti-religious, to recapitulate their hard words and to give them hard words in return, is not our intention. It is necessary, indeed, to mark firmly and clearly that from our criticism of their theology,—that grotesque mixture, as we have called it, of learned pseudo-science with popular legend,—their outcry does not make us go back one inch; that it is they who in our judgment owe an apology to Christianity and to religion, not we. But when this has once been clearly marked, our business with our assailants is over. Our business is henceforth not with them, but with those for whose sake *Literature and Dogma* was written.

These alone we have in view in noticing criticisms of that book, whatever may be their nature. And there have appeared criticisms of it very different from those blind and angry denunciations of which we have spoken, those denunciations from the point of view of popular and official theology. There have been criticisms deserving, some of them, our high respect; others, not our high respect only, but our warm gratitude also; all of them, our careful attention. Eminently of this sort were the criticisms by Mr. Llewellyn Davies in the *Contemporary Review*, by Professor Rauwenhoff in the Theological Review of Leyden, by M. Albert Réville in the *Academy*, by M. Charles Secrétan in the Swiss Review. But nothing is more tiresome to the public than an author's set vindication of his work and

reply to his critics, however worthy they may be of attention; and certainly nothing of this kind should we think of proposing to ourselves. To weigh what his critics say, to profit by it to the best of his judgment, and either to amend or to maintain his work according to his final conviction, is the right course for a criticised author to follow. It is all that the public want him to do, and all that we should in general wish to do ourselves.

But let us recall the object for which *Literature and Dogma* was written. It was written in order to win access for the Bible and its religion to many of those who now neglect them. It was written to restore the use of the Bible to those (and they are an increasing number) whom the popular theology with its proof from miracles, and the learned theology with its proof from metaphysics, so dissatisfy and repel that they are tempted to throw aside the Bible altogether. It was written to convince such persons that they cannot do without the Bible, that the popular theology and the learned theology are alike formed upon a profound misapprehension of the Bible; but that, when the Bible is read aright, it will be found to deal, in a way incomparable for effectiveness, with facts of experience most pressing, momentous, and real.

This conviction of the indispensableness of the Bible, which in *Literature and Dogma* we sought to impart to others, we ourselves had

and have. In England the conviction has long prevailed and been nearly universal, but there are now signs of its being shaken. To maintain it, to make it continue to prevail, to hinder its giving way and dying out, is our object. It seemed to us that the great danger to the Bible at present arises from the assumption that whoever receives the Bible must set out with admitting certain propositions, such as the existence of a personal God, the consubstantiality of Jesus Christ with this personal God who is his Father, the miraculous birth, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus. Now, the nature of these propositions is such that we cannot possibly verify them. It seemed to us that with the uninstructed or ill-instructed masses of our people this obstacle to the Bible's reception, which for a long time was an obstacle not existent for them at all, is, as things now stand, an obstacle almost insuperable. Therefore we sought and seek to show that the Bible is really based upon propositions which all can verify.

It is true, some deny that there exists the danger which we apprehend for the Bible. The masses, say they, the working men, are not hard-headed, reasoning people at all; they are eminently people led by their feelings and passions. Yes, led by their feelings and passions towards what flatters their feelings and passions; but religion and the Bible do not flatter their feelings and passions. Towards religion and the

Bible, which fill them with superstitious awe no longer, but which claim to check and control their feelings and passions, they have plenty of suspiciousness, incredulity, hard-headed common-sense to oppose. At most, they will make religion into something which flatters their feelings and passions. Thus one hears from those who know them, and one can see from their newspapers, that many of them have embraced a kind of revolutionary Deism, hostile to all which is old, traditional, established and secure; favourable to a clean sweep and a new stage, with the classes now in the background for chief actors. There is much to make the political Dissenters, on their part, fall in with this sort of religion, inasmuch as many of its ends are theirs too. And we see that they do incline to fall in with it, and to try to use it.

A revolutionary Deism of this kind may grow, not improbably, into a considerable power amongst us; so habituated are the people of this country to religion, and so strongly does their being vibrate to its language and excitements. The God of this religion of the future will be still a magnified and non-natural man indeed, but by no means the magnified and non-natural man of our religion as now current. He may be best conceived, perhaps, as a kind of tribal God of the Birmingham League. Not by any means a *Dieu des Bonnes Gens*, like the God of Béranger, a God who favours garrets, grisettes, gaiety, and

champagne; but a *Dieu des Quatre Libertés*, the God of Free Trade, Free Church, Free Labour, and Free Land;—with a new programme, therefore, and with Birmingham for his earthly headquarters instead of Shiloh or Jerusalem, but with the old turn still preserved for commanding to hew Agag in pieces, and with much even of the Biblical worship and language still retained; Mr. Jesse Collings and Mr. Chamberlain dancing before his ark, and Mr. Dale and Mr. George Dawson, in the Birmingham Town Hall, offering up prayer and sacrifice. All this is possible, and perhaps not improbable.

But a revolutionary Deism, based on the supposed rights of man and ardently destructive, is not the real religion of the Bible. It will fail; and its failure, the failure of that attempted application of the Bible which made the Bible flatter their feelings and passions, will discredit the Bible with the masses more than ever, will make them more than ever confront it with a suspiciousness, a hard incredulity, which take nothing upon trust. And fail the application must, for it is just one of those attempts at religion, at setting up something as righteousness which is not, that inevitably as often as we try them break down, and that by breaking down prove the grandeur and necessity of true religion, and testify to what it is. Nothing but righteousness will succeed, and nothing is righteousness but the method and secret and sweet reasonableness

of Jesus Christ. But these have nothing to do with the gospel of the rights of man, of the natural claim of every man to a certain share of enjoyment. Political science may create rights for a man and maintain them, may seek to apportion the means of enjoyment. Such is not the function of the Christian religion. Man sincere, man before conscience, man as Jesus put him, finds laid down for himself no rights; nothing but an infinite dying, and in that dying is life.

We persevere therefore in thinking, both that danger, whether from active hostility or from passive indifference, to the continued authority and almost universal use of the Bible in this country there is; and also that the only safe way of meeting this danger is to find, as grounds for men's continued veneration and use of the Bible, propositions which can be verified and which are unassailable. This, then, has been our object: to find sure and safe grounds for the continued use and authority of the Bible.

II

It will at once be evident how different a design is this, and how much humbler and more limited, from that of those Liberal philosophers whose design is in general to discover and to lay down *truth*, as (after Pilate)[1]

[1] See John xviii. 37. Pilate asks Jesus: 'Art thou a king?' Jesus answers: 'Yes, I am a king; a king of whom all who love

they call it. For we start with admitting that truth, so far at least as religion is concerned, is to be found in the Bible, and what we seek is, that the Bible may be used and enjoyed. All disquisitions about the Bible seem to us to be faulty and even ridiculous which have for their result that the Bible is less felt, followed, and enjoyed after them than it was before them. The Bible is in men's hands to be felt, followed, and enjoyed; this conviction we set out with. Men's instinct for self-preservation and happiness guided them to the Bible; now, it is of the essence of what gives safety and happiness to produce enjoyment and to exercise influence. And the Bible has long been enjoyed and enjoyed deeply; its summons to *lay hold of eternal life*, to *seek the kingdom of God*, has been a trumpet-call bringing life and joy to thousands. They have regarded the Bible as a source of life and joy, and they were right in so regarding it; we wish them to be able so to regard it still. All that we may say about the Bible we confess to be a failure, if it does not lead people to find the Bible a source of life and joy still.

Liberal philosophers reproach us with treating the Bible like an advocate; with assuming that

the truth are the subjects.' Jesus says, '*the* truth.' He means the doctrine of righteousness as set forth in the Old Testament first, and then interpreted and developed by himself. Pilate catches at the word *truth*; takes it (as if he had been a member of the British Association) in the sense of *universal knowledge*; drops the article, and asks his disconsolate question: 'What is truth?'

Israel had a revelation of extraordinary grandeur, that Jesus Christ said wonderfully profound things, and that the records of all this are something incomparably delightful and precious. Now, we say that no inquiries about the Bible can be fruitful that are not filled with a sense of all this, which Christendom has always felt and rightly felt, only it has justified its feelings on wrong grounds. But Liberal investigators of truth think, some of them, that the Bible often offends against morality, and at its best only utters in an old-fashioned and ineffective way the commonplaces of morality which belong to all ethical systems; therefore, say they, the Bible had better be dropped, and we should try to enounce in modern congenial language the new doctrines which will satisfy at once our reason and our imagination. Other investigators of truth destroy to the best of their ability all the grounds on which people have accustomed themselves to receive the Bible as something divine and precious: and then they think to save everything by a few words of general respect and esteem for the Bible, or for religion in the abstract. Their negative criticism has great fulness, ardour, and effect; their positive commendation of the Bible or religion is such as to have no effect at all. It was this which we blamed in the Bishop of Natal's treatment of the Bible, now several years ago. We have no wish to revive a past controversy; but we

thought then, and we think still, that it was a signal fault in Dr. Colenso's book that it cut away men's usual ground for their religion and supplied really no other in its place;—for his prayer of Ram, and his passage from Cicero's *Offices*, and his own sermon, we must be permitted to regard as being, under the circumstances, quite comically insufficient. Mr. Greg, who took up arms for Dr. Colenso, did not understand this; he does not understand it now. And no wonder; for his own original book on the Creed of Christendom, acute and eloquent as his writing often is, had on the whole the same fault as Dr. Colenso's work. The upshot of the matter, after reading him, seemed to be that the Bible was a document hopelessly damaged, and that the new doctrines which are to satisfy our reason and our imagination must be sought elsewhere.

The same is to be said of a very learned and exact book which has appeared lately, having for its title *Supernatural Religion*. Hereafter we shall have occasion to criticise several things in this work, but we now will remark of it only that it has the fault of leaving the reader, when he closes it, with the feeling that the Bible stands before him like a fair tree all stripped, torn, and defaced, not at all like a tree whose leaves are for the healing of the nations. No doubt this is not the author's design, and no doubt the current notions assailed by him, the popular view of the Bible-books and of their

composition, are full of error. But attacking these throughout two thick volumes with untiring vigour and industry, and doing nothing more, he simply leaves the ordinary reader, to whom the Bible has been the great, often the only, inspirer of his conduct, his imagination, his feelings,—he leaves him with the sense that he sees his Bible with a thousand holes picked in it and fatally discredited as an authority.

These investigators go upon the supposition that a man's first concern is to know *truth*, and that to know *truth* about the Bible is to know that much of it is legendary and much of it of uncertain authorship. We say, on the other hand, that no one knows the truth about the Bible who does not know how to enjoy the Bible; and he who takes legend for history and who imagines Moses or Isaiah or David or Paul or Peter or John to have written Bible-books which they did not write, but who knows how to enjoy the Bible deeply, is nearer the truth about the Bible than the man who can pick it all to pieces but who cannot enjoy it.

Perhaps, however, we ought to say that the author of *Supernatural Religion*, like Dr. Colenso, tries to provide a substitute for what he destroys. After declaring that 'there is little indeed in the history and actual achievements of Christianity to support the claim made on its behalf to the character of a scheme divinely revealed for the salvation of the human race,' he tells us that after

getting rid of Jewish mythology 'we rise to higher conceptions of an infinitely wise and beneficent Being,' that 'all that we do know of the regulation of the universe being so perfect and wise, all that we do not know must be equally so,' and that 'here enters the true and noble faith which is the child of reason.' Alas, for our part we should say rather: 'Here enter the poor old dead horses of so-called natural theology, with their galvanic movements!' But this is our author's prayer of Ram, his passage from Cicero's *Offices*, his sermon; and he promises us, so far as we understand him, more at a future time in the same style. We say that it is ludicrously insufficient, all of it, to fill the place of that old belief in Christianity's claim to the character of a scheme divinely revealed for the salvation of the human race, which he seeks to expel. We say it is a string of platitudes, without the power of awakening religious emotion and joy, and not a whit more provable, moreover, as scientific fact, than the miracle of the resurrection, or the Johannine authorship of the Fourth Gospel.

We, on the other hand, think that there is everything in the history and actual achievements of Christianity to support its claim to the character of a religion divinely revealed for the salvation of the human race. We look with apprehension on all that diminishes men's attachment to the Bible. But that the Bible is

not what men have fancied it, and that to be divinely revealed is not what men have supposed, time and experience are beginning to bear in upon the human mind. Many resist vehemently these intimations from time and experience. This resistance we believe to be utterly vain. We counsel men to accept them, but we seek to show that the Bible and the Christian religion subsist, all the while, as salutary, as necessary, as they ever were supposed to be; and that they now come out far more real, and therefore far more truly grand, than before.

Our adversaries will say, perhaps, that this attempted demonstration is *our* prayer of Ram. And the test of our work does really lie here. If the positive side in *Literature and Dogma*, if its attempt to recommend the Bible, to awaken enthusiasm for the Bible, on new grounds, proves ludicrously insufficient, weak and vain; if its negative side, its attempt to apply to popular religion the confutations and denials which time and experience suggest, proves the more prominent, the only operative one,—if this is so, then our work is, by our own confession and with our own consent, judged; it is valueless, perhaps mischievous. We can scarcely, however, be expected ourselves to admit that this is already proved. The time for the book's wide working, as we said on first publishing it, has hardly yet fully come. At its first appearance it was sure to be laid hold of by

those for whom it was not written, by the religious world as it is called, the unhesitating recipients of the Christianity popularly current, and to occasion scandal. But it was not written for those who at present receive the Bible on the grounds supplied either by popular or by metaphysical theology. It was written for those who from dissatisfaction with such grounds for the Bible are inclined to throw the Bible aside.

Into the hands of not a few readers of this sort the book has fallen, both here and abroad, and they have found it of service to them. They have been enabled by it to use and enjoy the Bible, when the common theology, popular or learned, had almost estranged them from it. But many and grave objections have been alleged against the book which has done them this service. Its conclusions about the meaning of the term *God*, and about man's knowledge of God, have been severely condemned; strong objections have been taken to our view of the Bible-documents in general, to our account of the Canon of the Gospels, to our estimate of the Fourth Gospel. What are the readers who believed they had derived benefit from our book to think of these objections to it, or at least of the more important among them? what weight are they to attach to them? Are they to go back from the way of reading and interpreting the Bible which we had counselled them to follow, and which they had begun to find profit

in, or are they to pursue it steadfastly? Puzzled and shaken by some of the objections we may suppose them to be; and yet, if they give ear to the objections, if they do not get the better of them and put them aside, they will lose, we believe, all sure hold on the Bible, they will be more and more baffled, distressed, and bewildered in their dealings with religion. To the extent, therefore, necessary for enabling such readers to surmount their difficulties, we propose to deal with the reproaches and objections brought against *Literature and Dogma*.

III

But first there is one reproach to be noticed, not so much for the reader's sake as for our own: the reproach of irreverent language, of improper and offensive personalities. The parable of the three Lord Shaftesburys, the frequent use of the names of the Bishops of Winchester and Gloucester to point a moral, — every one will remember to have heard of these as serious blemishes in *Literature and Dogma*. To have wounded the feelings of the religious community by turning into ridicule an august doctrine, the object of their solemn faith; to have wounded the feelings of individuals either by the wanton introduction of their names in a connection sure to be unpleasing to them, or else by offensive ridicule and persistent personal attack, is a crime

of which the majority of English reviewers have found us plainly guilty, and for which they have indignantly censured us. The *Guardian* has even been led by our mention of the Archbishop of York, and by our remarks on the Bishops of Winchester and Gloucester, to conclude that the order of bishops has upon us the effect of a red rag upon a bull, and that we cannot contemplate it without becoming infuriated. A word of notice these censures seem to demand.

As regards the three Lord Shaftesburys, we say boldly that our use of that parable shows our indulgence to popular Christianity. Polycarp sternly called the disfigured religion he saw prevalent around him, *atheism*. We have said, and it is important to maintain it, that popular Christianity at present is so wide of the truth, is such a disfigurement of the truth, that it fairly deserves, if it presumes to charge others with atheism, to have that charge retorted upon itself; and future ages will perhaps not scruple to condemn it almost as mercilessly as Polycarp condemned the religion of heathen antiquity. For us, the God of popular religion is a legend, a fairy-tale; learned theology has simply taken this fairy-tale and dressed it metaphysically. Clearly it is impossible for us to treat this fairy-tale with solemnity, as a real and august object, in the manner which might be most acceptable to its believers. But for the sake of the happiness it has given, of its beauty and pathos, and

of the portions of truth mixed up with it, it deserves, we have said, and from us it has received and always will receive, a nearly inexhaustible indulgence. Not only have we not called it atheism; we have entirely refused to join our Liberal friends in calling it a degrading superstition. Describing it under the parable of the three Lord Shaftesburys, we have pointed out that it has in it, as thus represented, nothing which can be called a degrading superstition; that it contains, on the contrary, like other genuine products of the popular imagination, elements of admirable pathos and power. More we could not say of it without admitting that it was not a legend or fairy-tale at all, and that its personages were not magnified and non-natural men. But this we cannot admit, although of course its adherents will be satisfied with nothing less. It was our object to carry well home to the reader's mind what a fairy-tale popular Christianity really is, what a trio of magnified and non-natural men is its Trinity. The indulgence, however, due from us to popular Christianity has been shown, if we have admitted that its fairy-tale, far from being a degraded superstition, is full of beauty and power, and that its divinities are magnifications of nothing unworthy, but of a sort of character of which we have an eminent example amongst ourselves, in a man widely beloved and respected, and whom no one respects more than we do.

As to the bishops, whose sacred order is supposed to fill us with rage and hatred, it must be modern bishops that have this effect, for several bishops of past times are mentioned in *Literature and Dogma* with veneration. Of three modern bishops, however, the deliverances are criticised: of the Archbishop of York, the late Bishop of Winchester, and the Bishop of Gloucester and Bristol. But the deliverances of all the three are by no means criticised in the same manner. Logical and metaphysical reasonings about essence, existence, identity, cause, design, have from all time been freely used to establish truths in theology. The Archbishop of York early acquired distinction in the study of logic; that he should follow in theological discussion a line of which St. Anselm, Descartes, Leibnitz, and Locke have set him the example, is a matter neither for surprise nor for ridicule. Certainly we hold that this line can lead in theology to nothing but perplexity and disappointment. We believe that religion could never have been originated by it, can never be confirmed by it. We say this freely when we see the Archbishop of York adopting it. But we say it without a thought of ridicule or disrespect towards the Archbishop of York, either for his adoption of such a line of argument, or for his management of the line of argument which he has thus chosen to employ.

The case is different with regard to that

brilliant and well-known personage, who since the publication of *Literature and Dogma* has passed away from amongst us. We feel more restraint in speaking of the late Bishop of Winchester now that he is dead than we should have felt in speaking of him in his lifetime. He was a man with the temperament of genius; and to his energy, his presence, his speech, this temperament could often lend charm and power. But those words of his which we quoted, and his public deliverances far too frequently, had a fault which in men of station and authority who address a society like ours, deserve at all times as severe a check as either blame or ridicule can inflict upon them. To a society like ours, a society self-regulating, which reads little that is serious and reflects hardly at all, but which desires to pursue its way comfortably and to think that it has in its customary notions and beliefs about religion, whenever it may be driven to fall back upon them, an impregnable stronghold to which it can always resort; to such a society men of eminence cannot do a worse service than to confirm and encourage it, with airs of superior knowledge, profound certainty, and oracular assurance, in its illusion. A man of Bishop Wilberforce's power of mind must know, if he is sincere with himself, that when he talks of 'doing something for the honour of Our Lord's Godhead,' or of 'that infinite separation for time and for eternity which is

involved in rejecting the Godhead of the Eternal Son,'—he must know that by this singular sort of mixture of unction and metaphysics he is solemnly giving a semblance of conceivability, fixity, and certainty to notions which do not possibly admit of them. He must know this, and yet he gives it, because it suits his purpose, or because the public, or a large body of the public, desire it; and this is clap-trap.

The *Times*, it is true, speaks of the current Christianity of this country as 'an English, a Protestant, and a reasonable religion.' The *Times*, however, is a popular newspaper; and the public, when it reads there things which suit its wishes, is always half-conscious at least that to suit its wishes they are written. But the late Bishop of Winchester was a man in high office and dignity, a man at the same time of great gifts; he spoke to the English public with authority, and with responsibility proportionate to that authority; yet he freely permitted himself the use of clap-trap. The use of clap-trap to such a public by such a man ought at least to be always severely treated before the tribunal of letters and science, for it will be treated severely nowhere else. Bishop Wilberforce was a man of a sympathetic temper, a dash of genius, a gift of speech, and ardent energy, who professed to be a guide in a time, a society, a sphere of thought, where the first requisite for a guide is perfect sincerity;—and he was signally addicted

to clap-trap. If by ridicule or by blame we have done anything to discredit a line such as that which he adopted, we cannot regret it. Those who use clap-trap as the late Bishop of Winchester used it, those who can enthusiastically extol him as an ideal bishop, only prove their valuelessness for the religious crisis upon which we are now entering. No talents and acquirements can serve in this crisis without an absolute renunciation of clap-trap. Those who cannot attain to this have no part in the future which is before us. Real insight and real progress are impossible for them; Jesus would have said of them: *They cannot enter into the kingdom of God.*

With regard to the Bishop of Gloucester and Bristol, we feel an esteem for him as one of the very few public men who in any degree carry on serious studies after having left the University. But he certainly joined himself with the Bishop of Winchester in holding the language on which we have animadverted above, and he laid himself open, therefore, to the same criticism.

Perhaps we ought, finally, to say one word of a remark concerning the late Mr. Maurice, which has given great umbrage to some of his friends. We cannot say that anything Mr. Maurice touched seems to us to have been grasped and presented by him with enough distinctness to give it a permanent value. But his was a pure and fine spirit, perpetually in a state of ferment

and agitation. On many young men of ability, agitated by the unsettled mental atmosphere in which we live, he exercised a great attraction. Some of them have cleared themselves; and as they cleared themselves they have come to regard Mr. Maurice as the author of all the convictions in which after their ferment and struggle they have found rest. This is generous in them, and we say with pleasure that to Mr. Maurice it does honour to have made such disciples.

And now we have done with these personal matters, and can address ourselves to our main purpose.

CHAPTER I

THE GOD OF MIRACLES

To people disposed to throw the Bible aside *Literature and Dogma* sought to restore the use of it by two considerations: one, that the Bible requires for its basis nothing but what they can verify; the other, that the language of the Bible is not scientific, but *literary*. That is, it is the language of poetry and emotion, approximate language thrown out, as it were, at certain great objects which the human mind augurs and feels after, and thrown out by men very liable, many of them, to delusion and error. This has been violently impugned. What we have now to do, therefore, is to ask whoever thought he found profit from what we said, to examine with us whether it has been impugned successfully; whether he and we ought to give it up, or whether we ought to hold by it firmly and hopefully still.

First and foremost has been impugned the definition which, proceeding on the rule to take nothing as a basis for the Bible but what can be

verified, we gave of God. And of this we certainly cannot complain. For we have ourselves said, that without a clear understanding in what sense this important but ambiguous term *God* is used, all fruitful discussion in theology is impossible. And yet, in theological discussion, this clear understanding is hardly ever cared for, but people assume that the sense of the term is something perfectly well known. 'A personal First Cause, that thinks and loves, the moral and intelligent governor of the universe,' is the sense which theologians in general assume to be the meaning, properly drawn out and strictly worded, of the term God. We say that by this assumption a great deal which cannot possibly be verified is put into the word God; and we propose, for the God of the Bible and of Christianity, a much less pretentious definition, but which has the advantage of containing nothing that cannot be verified. The God of the Bible and of Christianity is, we say: *The Eternal, not ourselves, that makes for righteousness.*

Almost with one voice our critics have expostulated with us for refusing to admit what they call a personal God. Nothing would be easier for us than, by availing ourselves of the ambiguity natural to the use of the term God, to give such a turn to our expressions as might satisfy some of our critics, or might enable our language to pass muster with the common

religious world as permissible. But this would be clean contrary to our design. For we want to recommend the Bible and its religion by showing that they rest on something which can be verified. Now, in the Bible God is everything. Unless therefore we ascertain what it is which we mean by God, and that what we mean we can verify, we cannot recommend the Bible as we desire. So against all ambiguity in the use of this term we wage war. Mr. Llewellyn Davies says that we ourselves admit that the most proper language to use about God is the approximative language of poetry and eloquence, language thrown out at an object which it does not profess to define scientifically, language which cannot, therefore, be adequate and accurate. If Israel, then, might with propriety call God 'the high and holy one that inhabiteth eternity,' why, he asks, may not the Bishop of Gloucester with propriety talk of 'the blessed truth that the God of the universe is a person'? Neither the one expression nor the other is adequate; both are approximate. We answer: Let it be understood, then, that when the Bishop of Gloucester, or others, talk of the blessed truth that the God of the universe is a person, they mean to talk, not science, but rhetoric and poetry. In that case our only criticism on their language will be that it is bad rhetoric and poetry, whereas the rhetoric and poetry of Israel is good. But the truth is they mean it for science; they mean

it for a more close and precise account of what Israel called poetically 'the high and holy one that inhabiteth eternity'; and it is false science because it assumes what it cannot verify. However, if it is not meant for science, but for poetry, let us treat it as poetry; and then it is language not professing to be exact at all, and we are free to use it or not to use it as our sense of poetic propriety may dictate. But at all events let us be clear about one thing: Is it meant for poetry, or is it meant for science?

If we were asked what in our own opinion we had by *Literature and Dogma* effected for the benefit of readers of the Bible, we should answer that we had effected two things above all. First, that we had led the reader to face that primary question, so habitually slurred over, what 'God' means in the Bible, and to see that it means the Eternal not ourselves that makes for righteousness. Secondly, that we had made him ask himself what is meant by 'winning Christ,' 'knowing Christ,' 'the excellency of the knowledge of Christ,' and find that it means laying hold of the method and secret of Jesus. And of these two things achieved by us, as we think, for the Bible-reader's benefit, the first seems to us the more important. Sooner or later he will find the Bible fail him, unless he is provided with a sure meaning for the word 'God.' Until this is done, and to keep steadily before

his mind how loosely he and others at present employ the word, we even recommend him to allow to the word no more contents than by its etymology it has, and to render it 'The Shining.' Archbishop Whately blames those who define words by their etymology, and ridicules them as people who should insist upon it that sycophant shall mean 'fig-shewer' and nothing else. But etymological definition, trifling and absurd when a word's imported meaning is sure, becomes valuable when the imported meaning is unfixed. There was at Athens a practice, says Festus, of robbing the fig-orchards; a law was passed to check it; under this law vexatious informations were laid, and those who laid them were called *sycophants*, fig-informers, or, if Archbishop Whately pleases, fig-shewers. Then the name was transferred to vexatious informers or to calumniators generally, and at last to a cheating impostor of any sort. The wider new meaning thus imported into the word was something quite clear, something on which all were agreed; and thenceforward to insist on limiting *sycophant* to its old etymological sense of fig-informer would have been ridiculous.

But the case is different when the fuller meaning imported into a word is something vague and loose, something on which people are by no means agreed. It is then often an excellent discipline to revert to the etymology; and to insist on confining ourselves to the sense

given by this, until we get for our word a larger sense clear and certain. 'The Shining is our hope and strength.' 'O Shining, thou art my Shining, early will I seek thee!' 'My soul, wait thou only upon The Shining, for my expectation is from him!' 'The fool hath said in his heart: There is no Shining!'[1] This will not give us satisfaction. But it will thereby stimulate us all the more to find a meaning to the word 'God' that does give us satisfaction; and it will keep vivid in our minds the thought how little we ourselves or others have such a meaning for the word at present.

Lord Lyttelton lately published in the *Contemporary Review* a disquisition on 'Undogmatic and Unsectarian Teaching,' which signally illustrates the utility of this etymological discipline. Lord Lyttelton is very severe upon those whom he calls 'the shallow sciolists and apostles of modern Unsectarianism'; and very favourable to dogma, or the determined, decreed and received doctrine of so-called orthodox theology. He draws out a formal list of propositions beginning with: 'God is, God made the world, God cares for men, God is the Father of men,' and ending with: 'The Deity of God is in one sense One in another Threefold, God is One in Three Persons.' He defies any one to show where in this list that which is universal ends and that which is dogmatic begins. And

[1] Psalm xlvi. 1; lxiii. 1; lxii. 5; xiv. 1.

his inference apparently is, that therefore the last propositions in the series may be freely taught. But if he examines his thoughts with attention he will find that he cannot tell where the character of his propositions changes because he has been using the word 'God' in the same sense all through the series. Now, the sense given to this word governs the sense of each and all of his propositions, but this sense he omits to furnish us with. Until we have it, we may agree that his latter propositions are dogmatic, but we cannot possibly concede to him that his earlier propositions have universal validity. Yet the whole force of his series of propositions, and of the argument which he founds upon it, depends on this: whether his definition of God, which he does not produce, is unchallengeable or no. Till he produces it, his readers will really best enable themselves to feel the true force of Lord Lyttelton's propositions by substituting for the word God its strict etymological equivalent Shining,—the only definition to which, until the fuller definition is produced and made good, the word has any right. The propositions will then run: 'The Shining is, The Shining made the world, The Shining cares for men, The Shining is the Father of men'; and so on to the final proposition: 'The Shining is One in Three Persons.' That entire inconclusiveness, of which we are by these means made fully aware, exists just as much in Lord Lyttelton's original propositions,

but without being noticed by himself or by most of his readers.

Resolutely clear with himself, then, in using this word 'God,' we urge our reader to be, whatever offence he may give by it. When he is asked in a tone of horrified remonstrance whether he refuses to believe in a personal God, let him steadily examine what it is that people say about a personal God, and what grounds he has for receiving it. People say that there is a personal God, and that a personal God is a God who thinks and loves. That there is an Eternal not ourselves which makes for righteousness and is called God, is admitted ; and indeed so much as this human experience proves. For the constitution and history of things show us that happiness, at which we all aim, is dependent on righteousness. Yet certainly we did not make this to be so, and it did not begin when we began, nor does it end when we end, but is, so far as we can see, an eternal tendency outside us, prevailing whether we will or no, whether we are here or not. There is no difficulty, therefore, about an Eternal not ourselves that makes for righteousness, and to which men have transferred that ancient high name, *God*, the Brilliant or Shining, by which they once adored a mighty object outside themselves, the sun, which from the first took their notice as powerful for their weal or woe. So that God is, is admitted ; but people maintain, besides,

that he is personal and thinks and loves. 'The Divine Being cannot,' they say, 'be without the perfection which manifests itself in the human personality as the highest of which we have any knowledge.' Now, 'the deeper elements of personality are,' they add, 'existence, consciousness of this existence and control over it.' These, therefore, they say, God must have. And that the Eternal that makes for righteousness has these, they account (though their language is not always quite consistent on this point) a fact of the same order and of as much certainty as that there is an Eternal that makes for righteousness at all. 'It is this power itself,' says M. Albert Réville, 'this not ourselves which makes for righteousness, that constantly reveals to us the fact that it is a Spirit, that is to say, not merely an influence, but life, consciousness, and love.' Religion, it is affirmed, religion, which is morality touched with emotion, is impossible unless we know of God that he is a person who thinks and loves. 'If the not ourselves which makes for righteousness,' says M. Réville, 'is an unconscious force, I cannot feel for it that sacred emotion which raises morality to the rank of religion. Man no longer worships powers of which he has discovered the action to be impersonal.' All this sort of argumentation, which M. Réville manages with great delicacy and literary skill, is summed up in popular language plainly and well by a writer

in the *Edinburgh Review*. 'Is the Power around us not a person? is what you would have us worship a thing? All existing beings must be either persons or things; and no sophistries can deter us from the invincible persuasion which all human creatures possess, that *persons* are superior to *things*.'

Now, before going farther, we have one important remark to make upon all this. M. Réville talks of those who *have discovered* the action of God to be impersonal. In another place he talks of *denying* conscious intelligence to God. The Edinburgh Reviewer talks of those who would have us worship a *thing*. We assure M. Réville that we do not profess to have discovered the nature of God to be impersonal, nor do we deny to God conscious intelligence. We assure the Edinburgh Reviewer that we do not assert God to be a *thing*. All we say is that men do not know enough about the Eternal not ourselves that makes for righteousness, to warrant their pronouncing this either a person or a thing. We say that no one has discovered the nature of God to be personal, or is entitled to assert that God has conscious intelligence. Theologians assert this and make it the basis of religion. It is they who assert and profess to know, not we. We object to their professing to know more than can be known, to their insisting we shall receive it, to their resting religion upon it. We want to rest religion on what can be verified,

not on what cannot. And M. Réville himself seems, when he lets us see the bottom of his thoughts, to allow that a personal God who thinks and loves cannot really be verified, for he says: 'It is in vain to ask how we can verify the fact that God possesses consciousness and intelligence.' But we are for resting religion upon some fact of which it shall not be in vain to ask whether we can verify it. However, the theologians' conception of God is represented as a far more satisfying one in itself than ours, and as having, besides, much to make its truth highly probable, at any rate, if not demonstrable. And the reader of *Literature and Dogma* may think, perhaps, that we have been over-cautious, over-negative; that we are really, as M. Réville says, 'decidedly too much afraid of the idea of the personality of God.' He may think, that though we have given him as his foundation something verifiable and sure, yet that what we have given him is a great deal less than what the theologians offer, and offer with such strong and good reasons for its truth, that it becomes almost certain if not quite, and a man is captious who will not accept it.

Descartes, as is well known, had a famous philosophical method for discovering truths of all kinds; and people heard of his method and used to press him to give them the results which this wonderful organ had enabled him to ascertain. Quite in a contrary fashion, we some-

times flatter ourselves with the hope that we may be of use by the very absence of all scientific pretension, by our very want of 'a philosophy based on principles interdependent, subordinate and coherent'; because we are thus obliged to treat great questions in such a simple way that any one can follow us, while the way, at the same time, may possibly be quite right after all, only overlooked by more ingenious people because it is so very simple.

Now, proceeding in this manner, we venture to ask the plain reader whether it does not strike him as an objection to our making God a person who thinks and loves, that we have really no experience whatever, not the very slightest, of persons who think and love, except in man and the inferior animals. We for our part are by no means disposed to deny that the inferior animals, as they are called, may have consciousness, that they may be said to think and love, in however low a degree. At any rate we can see them before us doing certain things which are like what we do ourselves when we think and love, so that thinking and loving may be attributed to them also without one's failing to understand what is meant, and they may conceivably be called persons who think and love. But really this is all the experience of any sort that we have of persons who think and love,—the experience afforded by ourselves and the lower animals. True, we easily and naturally attribute

all operations that engage our notice to authors who live and think like ourselves. We make persons out of sun, wind, love, envy, war, fortune; in some languages every noun is male or female. But this, we know, is figure and personification. Being ourselves alive and thinking, we naturally invest things with these our attributes, and imagine all action and operation to proceed as our own proceeds. This is a tendency which in common speech and in poetry, where we do not profess to speak exactly, we cannot well help following, and which we follow lawfully. In the language of common speech and of poetry, we speak of the Eternal not ourselves that makes for righteousness, as if he were a person who thinks and loves. Naturally we speak of him so, and there is no objection at all to our so doing.

But it is different when we profess to speak exactly, and yet make God a person who thinks and loves. We then find what difficulty our being actually acquainted with no persons superior to ourselves who think and love brings us into. Some, we know, have made their God in the image of the inferior animals. We have had the God Apis and the God Anubis; but these are extravagances. In general, as God is said to have made man in his own image, the image of God, man has returned the compliment and has made God as being, outwardly or inwardly, in the image of man. What we in general do is

to take the best thinking and loving of the best man, to better this best, to call it *perfect*, and to say that this is God. So we construct a magnified and non-natural man, by dropping out all that in man seems a source of weakness and inserting its contrary, and by heightening to the very utmost all that in man seems a source of strength, such as his thought and his love. Take the account of God which begins the Thirty-nine Articles, or the account of God in any Confession of Faith we may choose. The same endeavour shows itself in all of them: to construct a man who thinks and loves, but so immensely bettered that he is a man no longer. Then between this magnified man and ourselves we put, if we please, angels, who are men etherealised. The objection to the magnified man and to the men etherealised is one and the same: that we have absolutely no experience whatever of either the one or the other.

Support, however, is obtained for them from two grounds;—from metaphysical grounds, and from the ground of miracles. Let us take first the ground said to be given by miracles. Interferences and communications of such a kind as to be explainable on no other supposition than that of a magnified and non-natural man, with etherealised men ministering to him, are alleged to have actually happened and to be warranted by sure testimony. And there is something in this. If the alleged interferences

and communications have happened, then by this supposition they may fairly be explained. If the progress of the natural day was really stopped to enable the chosen people to win a great victory over its enemies, if a voice out of the sky really said when Jesus was baptized: *This is my beloved Son*,—then the magnified and non-natural man of popular religion, either by himself or with angels, etherealised men, for his ministers, is a supposition made credible, probable, and even almost necessary, by those incidents.

II

Thus we are thrown back on miracles; and the question is, are we to affirm that God is a person who thinks and loves because miracles compel us? Now, the reader of *Literature and Dogma* will recollect that half-a-dozen pages of that book, and not more, were taken up with discussing miracles. The *Guardian* thinks this insufficient. It says that solid replies are demanded to solid treatises, and that we ought to have taken Dr. Mozley's Bampton Lectures on Miracles, and given, if we could, a refutation to them. It tartly adds, however, that to expect this of us 'would be to expect something entirely at variance with Mr. Arnold's antecedents and with his whole nature.' Well, the author of *Supernatural Religion* has occupied half a thick volume in refuting Dr. Mozley's Bampton

Lectures. He has written a solid reply to that solid treatise. Sure we are that he has not convinced the *Guardian*, but it ought at least to be pleased with him for having so far done his duty. For our part, although we do justice to Dr. Mozley's ability, yet to write a refutation of his Bampton Lectures is precisely, in our opinion, to do what Strauss has well called 'going out of one's way to assail the paper fortifications which theologians choose to set up.' To engage in an *a priori* argument to prove that miracles are impossible, against an adversary who argues *a priori* that they are possible, is the vainest labour in the world. So long as the discussion was of this character, miracles were in no danger. The time for it is now past, because the human mind, whatever may be said for or against miracles *a priori*, is now in fact losing its reliance upon them. And it is losing it for this reason: as its experience widens, it gets acquainted with the natural history of miracles, it sees how they arise, and it slowly but inevitably puts them aside.

Far from excusing ourselves for the brevity and moderation with which the subject of miracles is in *Literature and Dogma* treated, we are disposed to claim praise for it. It is possible to spend a great deal too much time and mental energy over the thesis that miracles cannot be relied on. The thesis, though true, is merely negative, and therefore

of secondary importance. The important question is, what becomes of religion,—so precious, as we believe, to the human race,—if miracles cannot be relied on? We ought never so to immerse ourselves in the argument against miracles as to forget that the main question lies beyond, and that we must press forward to it. As soon as we satisfy ourselves that on miracles we cannot build, let us have done with questions about them and begin to build on something surer. Now, it is in a much more simple and unpretending way than controversialists commonly follow that we satisfy ourselves that we cannot build upon miracles.

For it is possible, again, to exaggerate untruly the demonstrative force of the case against miracles. The logical completeness of the case for miracles has been vaunted, and vaunted falsely; some people are now disposed to vaunt falsely the logical completeness of the case against miracles. Poor human nature loves the pretentious forms of exact knowledge, though with the real condition of our thoughts they often ill correspond. The author of *Supernatural Religion* asserts again and again that miracles are contradictory to a complete induction. He quotes Mr. Mill's rule: 'Whatever is contradictory to a complete induction is incredible,' and quotes Mr. Mill's account of a complete induction: 'When observations or experiments have been repeated so often

and by so many persons as to exclude all supposition of error in the observer, a law of nature is established'; and he asserts that a law of nature of this kind has been established against miracles. He brings forward that famous test by which Paley seeks to establish the Christian miracles, his 'twelve men of known probity and good sense relating a miracle wrought before their eyes, and consenting to be racked and burned sooner than acknowledge that there existed any falsehood or imposture in the case,' and he asserts that no affirmation of any twelve men would be sufficient to overthrow a law of nature, or to save, therefore, the Christian miracles.

Now, these assertions are exaggerated and will not serve. No such law of nature as Mr. Mill describes has been or can be established against the Christian miracles; a complete induction against them, therefore, there is not. Nor does the evidence of their reporters fail because the evidence of no men can make miracles credible. The case against the Christian miracles is that we have an induction, not complete, indeed, but enough more and more to satisfy the mind, and to satisfy it in an ever-increasing number of men, that miracles are untrustworthy. The case against their reporters is, that more and more of us see, and see ever more clearly, that these reporters were not and could not be the sort of picked

jury that Paley's argument requires, but that, with all the good faith in the world, they were men likely to fall into error about miracles, to make a miracle where there was none, and that they did fall into error and legend accordingly.

This being so, we have no inclination, even now, either to dwell at excessive length on the subject of miracles, or to make a grand show of victoriously demonstrating their impossibility. But we have to ask ourselves, if necessary, again and again, whenever anything is made to depend upon them, how their case really and truly stands, whether there can be any prospect, either for ourselves or for those in whose interest *Literature and Dogma* was written, of returning to a reliance upon them. And the more we consider it the more we are convinced there is none; and that the cause assigned in *Literature and Dogma* as fatal to miracles;—that the more our experience widens, the more we see and understand the process by which they arose, and their want of solidity,—is fatal to them indeed. The time has come when the minds of men no longer put as a matter of course the Bible-miracles in a class by themselves. Now, from the moment this time commences, from the moment that the comparative history of all miracles is a conception entertained and a study admitted, the conclusion is certain, the reign of the Bible-miracles is doomed.

III

Let us see how this is so. Herodotus relates, that, when the Persian invaders came to Delphi, two local heroes buried near the place, Phylacus and Autonous, arose, and were seen, of more than mortal stature, fighting against the Persians.[1] He relates, that before the onset at Salamis the vision of a woman appeared over an Æginetan ship, and cried in a voice which all the Grecian fleet heard: 'Good souls, how long will ye keep backing?'[2] He relates, that at Pedasus, in the neighbourhood of his own city Halicarnassus, the priestess of Athene had a miraculous sprouting of beard whenever any grievous calamity was about to befall the people around; he says in one place that twice this miraculous growth had happened, in another that it had happened thrice.[3] Herodotus writes here of times when he was himself alive, not of a fabulous antiquity. He and his countrymen were not less acute, arguing, critical people than the Jews of Palestine, but much more. Herodotus himself, finally, is a man of a beautiful character and of pure good-faith.

But we do not believe that Phylacus and Autonous arose out of their graves and were seen fighting with the Persians; we know by experience, we all say, how this sort of story

[1] Herod. viii. 38, 39. [2] Herod. viii. 84. [3] Herod. viii. 104.

grows up. And that after the Crucifixion, then, many dead saints arose and came out of the graves and went into the holy city and appeared unto many, is not this too a story of which we must say, the moment we fairly put it side by side with the other, that it is of the same kind with it, and that we know how the sort of story grows up? That the Phantom-woman called to the Æginetan crew at Salamis, *How long will ye keep backing?* we do not believe any the more because we are told that all the Grecian fleet heard it. We know, we all say, by experience, that this is just the sort of corroboration naturally added to such a story. But we are asked to believe that Jesus after his death actually cried to Paul on his way to Damascus: *It is hard for thee to kick against the pricks*, because the bystanders are said to have heard it, although to be sure in another place, with the looseness natural to such a story, the bystanders are said *not* to have heard this voice. That the Salamis story and the Damascus story are of one kind, and of what kind, strikes us the moment that we put the two stories together.

The miraculous beard of the priestess of Pedasus is really just like the miraculous dumbness of Zacharias, the father of John the Baptist. The priestess of Pedasus, however, is said by Herodotus in one place to have twice had her marvellous beard, in another to have had it

thrice; and the discrepancy proves, we all say, how loose and unhistorical this kind of story is. But yet when Jesus is in the Second Gospel said to have healed as he departed from Jericho one blind man who sate by the wayside, and in the First Gospel to have healed as he departed from Jericho two blind men who sate by the wayside, there is here, we are asked to believe, no discrepancy really at all. Two different healings are meant, which were performed at two different visits to Jericho. Or perhaps they were performed at one and the same visit, but one was performed as Jesus entered the city, and the other as he left it. And the words of St. Mark: 'And he came to Jericho; and as he went out of Jericho blind Bartimæus sate by the wayside,' really mean that Bartimæus sate there as Jesus went *in* to Jericho, and two other blind men sate by the wayside as he went *out*. How arbitrary, unnatural, and vain such an explanation is, what a mere device of our own to make a solid history out of a legend, we never feel so irresistibly as when we put the Jericho story by the side of others like it.

Yet still, in new and popular books, this precious device for reconciling inconsistent accounts of the same thing,—the hypothesis that the incident did really happen more than once,—is furbished up and brought out afresh. So strong, so persistent, so desperate is the endeavour to make that wonderful mixture of

truth and fiction, which the Four Gospels give us, into one uniform strain of solid history. The attempt must fail. It will impair the understanding of all who make it, it will mar the reputation of every critic who makes it, and yet will disappoint them after all. The kindest thing one can do to an intelligent reader of the Bible is to convince him of the utter hopelessness of any such attempt, to bring him speedily and once for all to a state of settled clearness on the subject. And this will be done, not so well directly, by arguing how improbable such an hypothesis as that incidents should exactly repeat themselves in itself is, as indirectly, by showing from examples how very prone is the human imagination to reproduce striking incidents a second time, although the incidents have in truth occurred only once.

To save the exactness of the Gospel narratives, the stories of the healing of the blind men at Jericho are made to pass, we have seen, for the stories of two separate miracles. But a more remarkable instance still of the actual production of an incident twice, is alleged in regard to the clearing the Temple of buyers and sellers. The Fourth Gospel, as is well known, puts the clearance at the beginning of Christ's career. The Synoptics put it at the end, shortly before his arrest. Probably the Synoptics are right; for the act was one which, coming from an unknown man, would have merely seemed

extravagant and exasperating, whereas, coming from Jesus after his line of teaching and reforming had become familiar, it would have had significance and use. But be this as it may; at any rate, if the act was done at the outset of the career of Jesus, then the Synoptics, one would say, must have made a mistake; if at the close, then the author of the Fourth Gospel. Not at all! The same striking incident with all its circumstances really happened, we are told, twice: first at the outset of Christ's career, and then again at its close. Neither the Synoptics, therefore, nor the author of the Fourth Gospel are in error.

Now, this seems surprising. But some who are lovers of the Bible may be inclined to try and believe it, may seek to cling to such an explanation, may argue for its possibility *a priori*. Crumble to bits, sooner or later, such explanations will. That which may convince a man, once and for ever, of their hollowness, and save him much loss of time and distress of mind, is the application of such a piece of experience as the following:—

Some years ago a newly-married couple were during their honeymoon travelling in the Alps. They made an excursion on Mont Blanc; the bride met with an accident there, and perished before her husband's eyes. The other day we had, strange to relate, just this touching story over again. Again a newly-married couple were in

the Alps during their honeymoon, again Mont Blanc was the scene of an excursion, again the bride met with an accident, again she perished in her husband's sight. Surprising, but there was the fact! People talked of it, the telegraph spread it abroad. But ours is a time of broad daylight and searching inquiry. The matter drew attention, and in a few days the telegraph announced that the second accident had never really happened at all, that it was a mere doubling and reflection of the first. Men's imagination reiterates in this way things which strike it, and loose relation narrates the doubled fact seriously. As our experience widens, it brings us more and more proof that this is so; and one day a signal example is decisive with us. The Mont Blanc story, or some story of the kind, comes with a sort of magic to make the scales fall from our eyes. It is still possible *a priori* that the Temple may have been cleared twice, and that there is no mistake in the Gospel reports. The induction against it is not a complete induction. But it is henceforth complete enough to serve; it convinces us. In spite of the *a priori* possibility, we cannot any longer believe in the double clearance of the Temple, and in the exactitude of both the accounts in the Gospels, even though we would.

IV

It is this impossibility of resting religion any more on grounds once supposed to be safe, such as that the Gospel narratives are free from mistake and that the Gospel miracles are trustworthy, which compels us to look for new grounds upon which we may build firmly. Those men do us an ill turn, and we owe them no thanks for it, who compel us to keep going back to examine the old grounds, and declaring their want of solidity. What we need is to have done with all this negative, unfruitful business, and to get to religion again;—to the use of the Bible upon new grounds which shall be secure. The old grounds cannot be used safely any more, and if one opens one's eyes one must see it. Those who inveigh against us could see it, if they chose, as plainly as we do; and they ought to open their eyes and see it, but they will not. And they want us to go on trusting foolishly to the old grounds as they do, until all tumbles in, and there is a great ruin and confusion. Let us not do so. Let those who have read *Literature and Dogma* with satisfaction be sure that what is in that book said against miracles, kept though it be within the narrowest limits possible, is indispensable, and requires so little space just because it is so very certain. Let him accustom himself to treat with steadiness,

with rigorous simplicity, all the devices to save those unsaveable things, the Bible miracles.

To reduce the miraculous in them to what are thought reasonable dimensions is now a favourite attempt. But if anything miraculous is left, the whole miracle might as well have been left; if nothing, how has the incident any longer the proving force of a miracle? Let us treat so absurd an attempt as it deserves. Neander supposes that the water at the marriage-feast at Cana was not changed by Jesus into wine, but was only endued by him with wine's brisk taste and exhilarating effects. This has all the difficulties of the miracle, and only gets rid of the poetry. It is as if we were startled by the extravagance of supposing Cinderella's fairy godmother to have actually changed the pumpkin into a coach and six, but suggested that she did really change it into a one-horse brougham. Many persons, again, feel now an insurmountable suspicion (and no wonder) of Peter's fish with the tribute-money in its mouth, and they suggest that what really happened was that Peter caught a fish, sold it, and paid the tribute with the money he thus got. This is like saying that all Cinderella's godmother really did was to pay a cab for her godchild by selling her vegetables. But then what becomes of the wonder, the miracle? Were there ever such apologists as these? They impair the credit of the Evangelists as much as we do, for they

make them transform facts to an extent wholly incompatible with trustworthy reporting. They impair it more; for they make them transform facts with a method incompatible with honest simplicity.

Simple, flexible common-sense is what we most want, in order to be able to follow truly the dealings of that spontaneous, irregular, wonderful power which gives birth to tales of miracle,—the imagination. It is easy to be too systematic. Strauss had the idea, acute and ingenious, of explaining the miracles of the New Testament as a reiteration of the miracles of the Old. Of some miracles this supplies a good explanation. It plausibly explains the story of the Transfiguration, for instance. The story of the illumined face of Jesus, — Jesus, the prophet like unto Moses, whom Moses foretold, — might naturally owe its origin to the illumined face of Moses himself. But of other miracles, such as the walking on the Lake of Gennesaret or the cursing of the barren fig-tree, Strauss' idea affords no admissible explanation whatever. To employ it for these cases can only show the imperturbable resolution of a German professor in making all the facts suit a theory which he has once adopted. But every miracle has its own mode of growth and its own history, and the key to one is not the key to others. Such a rationalising explanation as that above quoted of the money in the mouth

of Peter's fish is ridiculous. Yet a clue, a suggestion, however slight, of fact, there probably was to every miracle; and sometimes, not by any means always, this clue may be traced with likelihood.

The story of the feeding of the thousands may well have had its rise in the suspension, the comparative extinction, of hunger and thirst during hours of rapt interest and intense mental excitement. In such hours a trifling sustenance, which would commonly serve for but a few, will suffice for many. Rumour and imagination make and add details, and swell the thing into a miracle. This sort of incident, again, it is as natural to conceive repeating itself, as it is unnatural to conceive an incident like the clearance of the Temple repeating itself. Or to take the walking on the Sea of Galilee. Here, too, the sort of hint of fact which may have started the miracle will readily occur to every one. Sometimes the hint of fact, lost in our Bibles, is preserved elsewhere. The Gospel of the Hebrews,—an old Gospel outside the Canon of Scripture, but which Jerome quotes and of which we have fragments,—this Gospel, and other records of like character, mention what our Four Gospels do not: a wonderful light at the moment when Jesus was baptized. No one, so far as we know, has yet remarked that in this small and dropped circumstance,—a weird light on Jordan seen while Jesus was baptized, — we

not improbably have the little original nucleus of solid fact round which the whole miraculous story of his baptism gathered.

He does well, who, steadily using his own eyes in this manner, and escaping from the barren routine whether of the assailants of the Bible or of its apologists, acquires the serene and imperturbable conviction, indispensable for all fruitful use of the Bible in future, that in travelling through its reports of miracles he moves in a world, not of solid history, but of illusion, rumour, and fairy-tale. Only, when he has acquired this, let him say to himself that he has by so doing achieved nothing, except to get rid of an insecure reliance which inevitably some day or other would have cost him dear, of a staff in religion which must sooner or later have pierced his hand.

One other thing, however, he has done besides this. He has discovered the hollowness of the main ground for making God a person who thinks and loves, a magnified and non-natural man. Only a kind of man magnified could so make man the centre of all things, and interrupt the settled order of nature in his behalf, as miracles imply. But in miracles we are dealing, we find, with the unreal world of fairy-tale. Having no reality of their own, they cannot lend it as foundation for the reality of anything else.

CHAPTER II

THE GOD OF METAPHYSICS

THERE remain the grounds for asserting God to be a person who thinks and loves which are supplied by metaphysics.

Continuo auditae voces, vagitus et ingens.

At the mention of that name *metaphysics*, lo, essence, existence, substance, finite and infinite, cause and succession, something and nothing, begin to weave their eternal dance before us! with the confused murmur of their combinations filling all the region governed by *her*, who, far more indisputably than her late-born rival, political economy, has earned the title of the Dismal Science. Yet even here we will ask the reader of *Literature and Dogma*, if he does not disdain so unsophisticated a companion, to enter with us. And here, possibly, we may after all find reason to retract, and to own that the theologians are right. For metaphysics we know from the very name to be the science of things which come after natural things. Now,

the things which come after natural things are things not natural. Clearly, therefore, if any science is likely to be able to demonstrate to us the magnified and non-natural man, it must be the science of non-naturals.

II

Professor Huxley's interesting discourse the other day at Belfast drew attention to a personage who once was in the thoughts of everybody who tried to think,—René Descartes. But in this great man there were, in truth, two men. One was the anatomist, the physicist, the mechanical philosopher who exclaimed: 'Give me matter and motion, and I will make the world!' and of whom Pascal said that the only God he admitted was a God who was useless. This is the Descartes on whom Professor Huxley has asked us to turn once more our eyes: and no man could ask it better or more persuasively.

But there is another Descartes who had of late years been much more known, both in his own country and out of it, than Descartes the mechanical philosopher, and that is the Descartes who is said to have founded the independence of modern philosophy and to have founded its spiritualism. He began with universal doubt, with the rejection of all authority, with the resolve to admit nothing to be true which he could not clearly see to be true. He ended with

declaring that the demonstration of God and the soul was more completely made out than that of any other truth whatever, nay, that the certitude and truth of every science depended solely on our knowledge of the true God.[1]

Here we have the Descartes who is commonly said to have founded modern philosophy. And who, in this our day of unsettlement and of impatience with authority, convention, and routine, who, in this our day of new departures, can fail to be attracted by the author of the *Méthode*, and by his promises? '*Je n'admets rien qui ne soit nécessairement vrai;* I admit nothing which is not necessarily true.' '*Je m'éloigne de tout ce en quoi je pourrais imaginer le moindre doute;* I put aside everything about which I can imagine there being the smallest doubt.' What could we, who demand that the propositions we accept shall be propositions we can verify, ask more? '*Il n'y a que les choses que je conçois clairement et distinctement qui aient la force de me persuader entièrement; Je ne puis me tromper dans les jugements dont je connais clairement les raisons;* Only those things which I conceive clearly and distinctly have the power thoroughly to persuade me; I cannot be mistaken in those judgments of which I clearly know the reasons.' What can be better? We have really no other ground for the certainty of our convictions than this clearness.

[1] 'Je reconnais très clairement que la certitude et la vérité de toute science dépend de la seule connaissance du vrai Dieu.'

Will it be said, however, that there is here an opening, at any rate, for unsoundness, and that in the following sentence, for example, we can plainly see how? '*Toutes les choses que nous concevons clairement et distinctement sont vraies de la façon dont nous les concevons;* All things that we conceive clearly and distinctly are true as we conceive them.' There is an ambiguity, is there not, about 'clearly and distinctly'; a man may say or fancy he sees a thing clearly and distinctly, when he does nothing of the kind? True, this is so; a man may deceive himself as to what constitutes clearness and distinctness. Still, the test is good. We can only be sure of our judgments from their clearness and distinctness, though we may sometimes fancy that this clearness and distinctness is present when it is not.

At any rate, that first and greatest rule of Descartes, never to receive anything as true without having clearly known it for such, is for us unchallengeable. How vain and dangerous did we find Butler's proposal that we should take as the foundation of our religion something for which we had a low degree of probability! In this direction, assuredly, Descartes does not err. 'Inasmuch as my reason convinces me,' says he, 'that I ought to be as careful to withhold my belief from things not quite certain and indubitable as from those which I plainly see to be false, it will be a sufficient ground to me for rejecting all my old opinions if I find in them all some

opening for doubt.' Certainly this is caution enough; to many it will even seem excess of caution.

It is true, the doubts which troubled Descartes and which have troubled so many philosophers, —doubts, whether this world in which we live, the objects which strike our senses, the things which we see and handle, have any real existence, —are not exactly the doubts by which we ourselves have been most plagued. Indeed, to speak quite frankly, they are doubts by which we have never been tormented at all. Our trouble has rather been with doubts whether things which people assured us really existed or had really happened, but of which we had no experience ourselves and could not satisfy ourselves that any one else had had experience either, were really as people told us. But probably this limited character of our doubting arose from our want of philosophy and philosophical principles, which is so notorious, and which is so often and so uncharitably cast in our teeth. Descartes could look out of his window at Amsterdam, and see a public place filled with men and women, and say to himself that he had yet no right to be certain they were men and women, because they might, after all, be mere lay figures dressed up in hats and cloaks. This would never have occurred, perhaps, to the generality of mankind; to us, at any rate, it never would have occurred. But if this sort of scrupulosity led Descartes to

establish his admirable rules: 'I admit nothing which is not necessarily true'; 'Only those things which I conceive clearly and distinctly have the power to convince me'; we cannot regret that he was thus scrupulous. Men, all of them, as many as have doubts of any kind and want certainty, find their need served when a great man sets out with these stringent rules to discover what is really certain and verifiable. And we ourselves accordingly, plain unphilosophical people as we are, did betake ourselves once to Descartes with great zeal, and we were thus led to an experience which we have never forgotten. And perhaps it may be of use to other plain people, for the purpose of the inquiry which at present occupies us,—the inquiry whether the solid and necessary ground of religion is the assurance that God is a person who thinks and loves,—to follow over again in our company the experience which then befell us.

Every one knows that Descartes, looking about him, like Archimedes, for a firm ground whereon he might take his stand and begin to operate, for one single thing which was clearly certain and indubitable, found it in the famous '*Cogito, ergo sum;* I think, therefore I am.' If I think, said he, I am, I exist; my very doubting proves that I, who doubt, am. 'After thinking it well over and examining it on all sides, to this conclusion I cannot but come; I cannot but consider it settled that this proposition, *I am, I exist*, is

necessarily true every time that I pronounce it or that I conceive it in my mind.' The discovery of this axiom appears to have filled Descartes with a profound sense of certitude and of satisfaction. And the axiom has been hailed with general approval and adopted with general consent. Locke repeats it as self-evident, without taking the trouble to assign to Descartes the authorship of it: 'If I doubt of all other things, that very doubt makes me perceive my own existence and will not suffer me to doubt of that.' Thinker after thinker has paid his tribute of admiration to the axiom; it is called the foundation of modern philosophy.

Now we shall confess without shame,—for to the prick of shame in these matters, after all the tauntings and mockings we have had to undergo, we are by this time quite dead,—we shall confess that from this fundamental axiom of Descartes we were never able to derive that light and satisfaction which others derived from it. And for the following reason. The philosopher omits to tell us what he exactly means by to *be*, to *exist*. These terms stand for the most plain, positive, fundamental of certainties, which is established for us by the fact that we think. Now what to *think* means we all know; but even if we did not, Descartes tells us. 'A thing which thinks,' says he, 'is a thing which doubts, which understands, which conceives, which affirms, which denies, which wishes, which declines, which imagines

also, and which feels.' So far so good. But Descartes does not tell us what those other terms *be* and *exist* mean, which express that fundamental certainty established for us by the fact of our thinking; and this we do not so clearly know of ourselves without being told. Philosophers know, of course, for they are always using the terms. And perhaps this is why Descartes does not trouble himself to explain his terms, I *am*, I *exist*, because to him they carry an even more clear and well-defined sense than the term, I *think*. But to us they do not; and we suspect that the majority of plain people, if they consented to examine their minds, would find themselves to be in like case with us.

To get a clear and well-defined sense for the terms, I *am*, I *exist*, in the connection where Descartes uses them, we are obliged to translate them at a venture into something of this kind: 'I feel that I am alive.' And then we get the proposition: 'I think, therefore I feel that I am alive.' This asserts our consciousness to depend upon our thinking rather than upon anything else which we do. The assertion is clear, it is intelligible, it seems true; and perhaps it is what Descartes meant to convey. Still, it is disappointing to a plain man, who has been attracted to Descartes by his promises of perfect clearness and distinctness, to find that his fundamental proposition, his first great certainty, is something which we cannot grasp as it stands,

but that we have to translate it into other words in order to be able to grasp it.

Perhaps, too, this translation of ours does not, after all, represent what Descartes himself meant by 'I am, I exist.' Perhaps he really did mean something more by the words, something that we fail to grasp. We say so, because we find him, like philosophers in general, often speaking of essence, existence, and substance, and in speaking of them he lays down as certain and evident many propositions which we cannot follow. For instance, he says: 'We have the idea of an infinite substance, eternal, all-knowing, all-powerful, the creator of all things, and with every possible perfection.' Again, he says: 'The ideas which represent substances to us are undoubtedly something more, and contain in themselves, so to speak, more objective reality, that is to say, they partake by representation in more degrees of being or perfection, than those which represent to us modes or accidents only.' 'Undoubtedly,' says he, this is so; he introduces it too with saying: 'It is evident.' So our guide, who admits nothing which is not necessarily true, and puts aside everything about which he can imagine there being the smallest doubt, lays down that we have the idea of an *infinite substance*; and that of *substances* we have ideas distinguished from ideas of modes or accidents by their possessing more *being*, and this is equivalent to possessing more perfection. For

when we assert that one thing is more *perfect* than another, this means, Descartes informs us, that it has more reality, more *being*.

All this, I say, our guide finds certain and not admitting of the least doubt. It is part of the things which we conceive with clearness and distinctness, and of which, therefore, we can be persuaded thoroughly. Man is a finite substance, that is, he has but a limited degree of being, or perfection. God is an infinite substance, that is, he has an unlimited degree of being, or perfection. Existence is a perfection, therefore God exists; thinking and loving are perfections, therefore God thinks and loves. In short, we have God, a perfect and infinite Being, eternal, all-knowing, all-powerful, the creator of all things, and having every perfection we can think of for him. And all this turns upon the words *is*, *being*. Infinite being, necessary being, being in itself, as opposed to our own finite, contingent, dependent being, is something, says Descartes, that we clearly conceive. Now something cannot come from nothing, and from us this infinite being could never have come; therefore it exists in itself, and is what is meant by God.

Not Descartes only, but every philosopher who attempts a metaphysical demonstration of God, will be found to proceed in this fashion, and to appeal at last to our conception of *being*, *existing*. Clarke starts with the proposition that something must have existed from eternity, and

so arrives at a self-existent cause, which must be an intelligent *Being;* in other words, at God as a person who thinks and loves. Locke lays it down that 'we know there is some real being, and that nonentity cannot produce any real being,' and so brings us to an eternal, powerful, knowing *Being;* in other words, God as a person who thinks and loves. Of the God thus arrived at, Locke, like Descartes, says that, 'the evidence is, if I mistake not, equal to mathematical certainty.' St. Anselm begins with an essential substantial good and great, whereby, he says, it is absolutely certain, and whoever likes can perceive it, that all the multifarious great and good things in the world get their goodness and greatness; and thus again we come to a one *Being* essentially great and good, or Divine Person who thinks and loves.

Now here it is, we suppose, that one's want of talent for abstract reasoning makes itself so lamentably felt. For to us these propositions, which we are told are so perfectly certain, and he who will may perceive their truth,—the propositions that we have the idea of an infinite substance, that there is an essential substantial good and great, that there is some real being, that a self-existent cause must have been from eternity, that substances are distinguished in themselves and in our ideas of them from modes or accidents by their possessing more being,—have absolutely no force at all, we simply

cannot follow their meaning. And so far as Descartes is concerned, this, when we first became aware of it, was a bitter disappointment to us. For he had seemed to promise us something which even *we* could understand, when he said that he put aside everything about which he could imagine there being the smallest doubt, and that the proof of things to us was in the perfect clearness and distinctness with which we conceived them.

However, men of philosophical talents will remind us of the truths of mathematics, and tell us that the three angles of a triangle are undoubtedly equal to two right angles, yet very likely from want of skill or practice in abstract reasoning we cannot see the force of *that* proposition, and it may simply have no meaning for us. And perhaps this may be so. But then the proposition in question is a deduction from certain elementary truths, and the deduction is too long or too hard for us to follow, or, at any rate, we may have not followed it or we may have forgotten it, and therefore we do not feel the force of the proposition. But the elementary assertions in geometry even we can apprehend; such as the assertion that two straight lines cannot enclose a space, or that things which are equal to the same are equal to each other. And we had hoped that Descartes, after his grand promises of clearness and certainty, would at least have set out with assertions of this

kind, or else with facts of the plainest experience; that he would have started with something we might apprehend as we apprehend that three and two make five, or that fire burns. Instead of this, he starts with propositions about *being*, and does not tell us what *being* is. At one time he gives us hopes we may get to know it, for he says that to possess more being is to possess more perfection; and what men commonly mean when they talk of perfection, we think we can discover. But then we find that with Descartes to possess more perfection means to possess, not what men commonly call by that name, but to possess more being. And this seems to be merely going round in a circle, and we have to confess ourselves fairly puzzled and beaten.

So that when even Fénelon says, that most attractive of theologians: 'It is certain that I conceive a Being, infinite, and infinitely perfect,' —that is to say, infinitely *being*, we have to own with sorrow and shame that we cannot conceive this at all, for want of knowing what *being* is. Yet it is, we repeat, on the clearness and certainty of our conceptions of *being*, that the demonstration of God,—the most sure, as philosophers say, of all demonstrations, and on which all others depend,—is founded. The truth of all that people tell us about God, turns upon this question what *being* is. Philosophy is full of the word, and some philosophies are concerned with hardly anything else. The

scholastic philosophy, for instance, was one long debate about *being* and its conditions. Great philosophers, again, have established certain heads or 'categories' as they call them, which are the final constitutive conditions of things, into which all things may at last be run up; and at the very top of these categories stands *essence* or *being*.

Other metaphysical terms do not give us the same difficulty. Substance, for example, which is the Latin translation of essence or being, merely means *being* in so far as *being* is taken to be the subject of all modes and accidents, that which stands under them and supplies the basis for them. Perhaps *being* does really do this, but we want first to know what *being* is. Spirit, which they oppose to matter, means literally, we know, only breath, but we use it for a *being* which is impalpable to touch as breath is. Perhaps this may be right, but we want first to know what *being* is. Existence, again, means a stepping forth, and we are told that God's essence involves existence, that is, that God's *being* necessarily steps forth, comes forth. Perhaps it does, but we require first to know what *being* is.

Till we know this, we know neither what to affirm nor what to refuse to affirm. We refused to affirm that God is a person who thinks and loves, because we had no experience at all of thinking and loving except as attached

to a certain bodily organisation. But perhaps they are not attached to this, but to *being*, and we ourselves have them, not because we have a bodily organisation, but because we partake of *being*. Supreme *being*, therefore *being* in itself, which is God, must think and love more than any of us. Angels, too, there may be, whole hierarchies of them, thinking and loving, and having their basis in *being*. In the same way, again, our difficulties about the Real Presence may vanish. In bread there is, perhaps, an essence or substance separable from what the theologians call 'that group of visible and tangible phenomena which suggest the presence of bread,' in other words, from that assemblage of certain atoms in a certain combination which we think is the bread; and in the Sacred Host this essence or substance is not substance of bread but divine substance. All this may be so; only we cannot possibly verify any of it until we know what *being* is; and we want to rest religion upon something which we can verify. And we thought that Descartes, with his splendid promises, was going to help us here; but just at the very pinch of the matter he fails us.

After all, plain, simple people are the great majority of the human race. And we are sure, as we have said, that hundreds and thousands of people, if their attention were drawn to the matter, would acknowledge that they shared our slowness to see at once what *being* is,

and, when they found how much depended on seeing it, would gladly accompany us in the search for some one who could give us help. For on this we ourselves, at any rate, were bent:—to discover some one who could tell us what *being* is. Such a kind soul we did at last find; and in these days we need hardly add that he was a German professor.

III

But not a professor of logic and metaphysics. No, not Hegel, not one of those great men, those masters of abstruse reasoning, who discourse of being and non-being, essence and existence, subject and object, in a style to which that of Descartes is merely child's play. These sages only bewildered us more than we were bewildered already. For they were so far advanced in their speculations about being, that they were altogether above entertaining such a tyro's question as what *being* really was.

No, our professor was a mere professor of words, not of ontology. We bethought ourselves of our old resource, following the history of the human spirit, tracking its course, trying to make out how men have used words and what they meant by them. Perhaps in the word *being* itself, said we to ourselves, there may be something to tell us what it at first meant and how men came to use it as they do.

Abstracta ex concretis, say the etymologists; the abstract has been formed out of the concrete. Perhaps this abstract *being*, also, has been formed out of some concrete, and if we knew out of what, we might possibly trace how it has come to be used as it has. Or has indeed the mystic vocable no natural history of this sort, but has dropped out of heaven, and all one can say of it is that it means *being*, something which the philosophers understand but we never shall, and which explains and demonstrates all sorts of hard problems, but to philosophers only, and not to the common herd of mankind? Let us inquire, at any rate.

So, then, the natural history of the word was what we wanted. With a proper respect for our Aryan forefathers, first we looked in Sanscrit dictionaries for information. But here, probably from our own ignorance and inexperience in the Sanscrit language, we failed to find what we sought. By a happy chance, however, it one day occurred to us to turn for aid to a book about the Greek language,—a language where we were not quite so helpless as in Sanscrit,—to the 'Principles of Greek Etymology,' by Dr. George Curtius, of Leipsic.[1] He it was who succoured a poor soul whom the philosophers had driven well-nigh to despair, and he deserves, and shall have, our everlasting gratitude.

[1] *Grundzüge der griechischen Etymologie*, von Georg Curtius, 3rd edit., Leipzig 1869.

In the book of Dr. Curtius we looked out the Greek verb *eimi, eis, esti*, the verb which has the same source as the English verb *is*. Shall we ever forget the emotion with which we read what follows:—'That the meaning, addressed to the senses, of this very old verb substantive was *breathe*, is made all but certain by the Sanscrit *as-u-s*, life-breath, *asu-ra-s*, living, and the Sanscrit *ás*, mouth, parallel with the Latin *os*. The Hebrew verb substantive *haja* or *hawa* has, according to Renan (*De l'Origine du Langage*, 4th ed., p. 129), the same original signification. The three main meanings succeed one another in the following order: *breathe, live, be*'? Here was some light at last! We get, then, for the English *is*,—the French and Latin *est*, the Greek *estin* or *esti*,—we get an Indo-European root *as*, breathe.

To get even thus much was pleasant, but what was our joy to find ourselves put by Dr. Curtius, in some words following those we have quoted, on the trace of a meaning for the mysterious term *being* itself? Dr. Curtius spoke of a root synonymous with *as*, the root *bhu*, in Greek φυ, and referred his readers to No. 417. To No. 417 we impatiently turned. We found there the account of the Greek verb φύω, φύομαι, I beget, I grow. This word is familiar to us all in our own words *future* and *physics*, in the French *fus*, in the Latin *fui*. All these are from an Indo-European root *bhu*, 'be,' which

had primarily that sense of 'grow' which its Greek derivative has kept. 'The notion *be* attaches to this root,' says Dr. Curtius, 'evidently on the foundation only of the more primitive *grow*.' If the root *as*, breathe, gives us, then, our *is*, *essence*, the root *bhu*, grow, gives us our *be*, *being*. Is, essence and entity, am, be and being, here we have the source of them all! as in another Indo-European root, *sta*, stand, we have, as everybody knows, the source of our words *existence*, *substance*. Our composite verb substantive in English, like the verb substantive in Latin, employs both the root *as* and the root *bhu*; we have *is* and *be*, as the Latin has *est* and *fui*. The French verb substantive manages to employ,—so M. Littré in his admirable new dictionary points out,—the roots *as*, *bhu*, and *sta*, all three.

Now, then, it remained for us to ask, how these harmless concretes, *breathe*, *grow*, and *stand*, could ever have risen into those terrible abstracts, *is*, *be*, and *exist*, which had given us so much torment. And really, by attending to the natural course followed by the human mind, to men's ways of using words and arriving at thoughts, this was not so very hard to make out. Only, when once it was made out, it proved fatal to the wonderful performances of the metaphysicians upon their theme of *being*. However, we must not anticipate.

Men took these three simple names of the

foremost and most elementary activities in that which they knew best and were chiefly concerned with,—in themselves,—they took *breathing*, *growing*, *standing forth*, to describe *all* activities which were remarked by their senses or by their minds. So arose the verb substantive. Children, we can observe, do not connect their notions at all by the verb, the word expressing activity. They say 'horse, black,' and there they leave it. When man's mind advanced beyond this simple stage, and he wanted to connect his notions by representing one notion as affecting him through its appearing or operating in conjunction with another notion, then he took a figure from the activity that lay nearest to him and said: 'The horse breathes (is) black.' When he got to the use of abstract nouns his verb still remained the same. He said: 'Virtue breathes (is) fair; Valour growing (being) praiseworthy.' Soon the sense of the old concrete meaning faded away in the new employment of the word. That slight parcel of significance which was required had been taken, and now this minimum alone remained, and the rest was left unregarded and died out of men's thoughts.

We may make this clearer to ourselves by observing what has happened in the French and Dutch words for our common word *but*. *But* is in French *mais*, the Latin *magis*, our word *more*; in Dutch it is *maar*, our word *more* itself. *Mais* and *maar* were originally used, no doubt with

the sense of their being a check, or stop, given to something that had been said before, by the *addition* to it of something fresh. The primitive sense of addition faded away, the sense of check remained alone. And so it was with *as* and *bhu*, the primitive *breathe* and *grow*. Whatever affected us by appearing to us, or by acting on us, was at first said by a figure to breathe and grow. The figure was forgotten; and now *as* and *bhu* no longer raised the idea of breathing and growing, but merely of that appearance or operation,—a kind of shadow of breathing and growing,—which these words *as* and *bhu* had at first been employed to convey. And for breathing and growing other words than *as* and *bhu* were now found, just as, in French, *mais* now no longer means *more*, but for *more*, another word has been found: *plus*. Sometimes, however, as in the case of the Greek verb γίγνομαι, ἐγενόμην, we see the same word continuing to be used both in its old full sense and in its new shrunk sense; γενέσθαι may mean both *to be born* and *to be*. But the user employed it, probably in the two different acceptations, as if he had been employing two different words; nor did its use as hardly more than a copula necessarily raise in his mind the thought of its originally fuller significance.

Nor were these primitive verbs, *as* and *bhu*, used only as a copula, to connect, in the manner we have described, the attribute with its subject.

They were also used as themselves expressing an attribute of the subject. For when men wanted strongly to affirm that action or operation of things, that image of their own life and activity, which impressed itself upon their mind and affected them, they took these same primitive verbs and used them emphatically. Virtue *is*, they said; Truth does not cease to *be*. Literally: Virtue *breathes;* Truth does not cease to *grow*. A yet more emphatic affirmation of this kind was supplied by the word *exist*. For to exist is literally to step forth, and he who steps forth gives a notable proof of his life and activity. Men said, therefore: Duty *exists*. That is, according to the original figure: Duty steps forth, stands forth.

And the *not ourselves*, mighty for our weal or woe, which so soon by some one or other of its sides attracted the notice of man, this also man connected with whatever attributes he might be led to assign to it, by his universal connective, his now established verbs *as* and *bhu*, his *breathe* and *grow* with their blunted and shadowy sense of breathing and growing. He said: God *breathes* angry; our God *breathes* a jealous God. When he wanted to affirm emphatically that this power acts, makes itself felt, lasts, he said: God *is*, God *exists*. In other words: God *breathes*, God *steps forth*.

Israel conceived God with a solemnity and a seriousness unknown to other nations, as 'The

not ourselves that makes for righteousness.' 'When I speak of this unique God of Israel,' asked Moses, 'how shall I name him?' And the answer came (we will give it in the words of the literal Latin version, printed under the Hebrew in Walton's noble Polyglott Bible): 'Dixit Deus ad Mosen: *Ero qui ero.* Et dixit: Sic dices filiis Israel: *Ero* misit me ad vos.' '*I will breathe* hath sent me unto you'; or, as the Arabic version well renders this mystic name: *The Eternal, that passeth not.* For that this is the true meaning of the name there can be no doubt: —The *I will go on living, operating, enduring.* 'God here signifies of himself,' says Gesenius, 'not simply that he is he who is, for of this every one must perceive the frigidity, but he signifies emphatically that he is *he who is always the same*, that is, the Immutable, the Eternal.' To the like effect Dr. Kalisch, in his valuable Commentary, after reciting the series of more fanciful and metaphysical interpretations, rests finally in this, the simple and the undoubtedly true one: 'He that changeth not, and that faileth not.'

'*I will breathe* hath sent me unto you!' Still the old sensuous image from the chief and most striking function of human life, transferred to God, taken to describe, in the height and permanency of its beneficent operation, this mighty *not ourselves*, which in its operation we are aware of, but in its nature, no.

And here is, indeed, the grand conclusion

to be drawn from this long philological disquisition, from our persistent scrutiny of the primitives *as* and *bhu*, breathe and grow: that by a simple figure they declare a perceived energy and operation, nothing more. Of a *subject*, as we call him, that performs this operation, of the nature of something outside the range of plants and of animals, which do indeed grow and breathe, and from which the figure in *as* and *bhu* is borrowed, they tell us nothing. But they have been falsely supposed to bring us news about the primal nature of things, to declare a subject in which inhered the energy and the operation we had noticed, to indicate a fontal category or supreme constitutive condition, into which the nature of all things whatsoever might be finally run up.

For the original figure, as we have said, was soon forgotten; and *is* and *be*, mysterious petrifactions, remained in language as if they were autochthons there, and as if no one could go beyond or behind them. Without father, without mother, without descent, as it seemed, they yet were omnipresent in our speech, and indispensable. Allied words in which the figure was manifest, such as existence and substance, were thought to be figures from the world of sense pressed into the service of a metaphysical reality enshrined in *is* and *be*. That imposing phrase of the metaphysicians for summing up the whole system of things, *substance and accident*,

— phenomena, and that which stands under phenomena and in which they inhere, — must surely, one would think, have provoked question, have aroused misgivings, — people must surely have asked themselves what the *that* which stands under phenomena was,—if the answer had not been ready: *being*. And *being* was supposed to be something absolute, which stood under all things. Yet *being* was itself all the while but a sensuous figure, *growing*, and did not of necessity express anything of a thing's nature, expressed only man's sense of a thing's operation.

But philosophers, ignorant of this, and imagining that they had in *being* a term which expressed the highest and simplest nature of things, stripped off, to use a phrase of Descartes, when they wanted to reach the naked truth of a thing, one of the thing's garments after another, they stripped away this and that figure and size for bodies, this and that thought and desire for mind, and so they arrived at the final substances of bodies and of mind, their *being* or *essence*, which for bodies was a substantial essence capable of infinite diversities of figure and size, for mind a substantial essence capable of infinite diversities of thought and desire. And that for bodies and for mind they thus got a highest reality merely negative, a reality in which there was less of reality than in any single body or mind they knew, this they did not heed, because in *being* or *essence* they supposed they had the supreme reality.

Finally, in considering God they were obliged, if they wanted to escape from difficulties, to drop even the one characteristic they had assigned to their substance, that of admitting modes and accidents, and thus to reduce, in fact, their idea of God to nothing at all. And this they themselves were much too acute, many of them, not to perceive; as Erigena, for instance, says: '*Deus non immerito nihilum vocatur*; God may be not improperly called nothing.' But this did not make them hesitate, because they thought they had in pure *being*, or *essence*, the supreme reality, and that this *being* in itself, this *essence* not even serving as substance, was God. And therefore Erigena adds that it is *per excellentiam*, by reason of excellency, that God is not improperly called nothing: '*Deus per excellentiam non immerito nihilum vocatur.*'

To such a degree do words make man, who invents them, their sport! The moment we have an abstract word, a word where we do not apprehend both the concrete sense and the manner of this sense's application, there is danger. The whole value of an abstract term depends on our true and clear conception of that which we have abstracted and now convey by means of this term. *Animal* is a valuable term because we know what breathing, *anima*, is, and we use animal to denote all who have this in common. But the *être* of Descartes is an unprofitable term, because we do not clearly

conceive what the term means. And it is, moreover, a dangerous term, because without clearly conceiving what it means, we nevertheless use it freely. When we at last come to examine the term, we find that *être* and *animal* really mean just the same thing: *breather*, that which has vital breath.

How astounding are the consequences if we give to *être* and its cognates this their original sense which we have discovered! *Cogito, ergo sum*, will then be: 'I think, therefore I breathe.' A true deduction certainly; but *Comedo, ergo sum*, 'I eat, therefore I breathe,' would be nearly as much to the purpose! Metaphysics, the science treating of *être* and its conditions, will be the science treating of breathing and its conditions. But surely the right science to treat of breathing and its conditions is not metaphysics, but physiology! 'God *is*,' will be, God *breathes*; exactly that old anthropomorphic account of him which our dogmatic theology, by declaring him to be without body, parts, or passions, has sought to banish! And even to adore,—like those men of new lights, the French revolutionists, haters of our dogmatic theology, —even to adore, like Robespierre, the *Être Suprême*, will be only, after all, to adore the Supreme Animal! So perfidiously do these words *is* and *be*,—on which we embarked our hopes because we fancied they would bring us to a thinking and a loving, independent of all

material organisation,—so perfidiously do they land us in mere creature-worship of the grossest kind. Nay, and perhaps the one man who uses that wonderful abstract word, *essence*, with propriety, will turn out to be, not the metaphysician or the theologian, but the perfumer. For while nothing but perplexity can come from speaking of the *breathing* of the Divine Nature, there is really much felicity in speaking of the *breathing* of roses.

IV

Dismayed, then, at the consequence of a rash use of *being* and *essence*, we determined henceforth always to subject these vocables, when we found them used in a way which caused us any doubt, to a strict examination. Far from remaining, as formerly, in helpless admiration of the philosophers, when upon the foundation of these words they built their wonderful cloud-houses and then laughed at us for not being able to find our way through them, we set ourselves to discover what meaning the words, in men's use of them, really did and could contain. And we found that the great thing to keep steadily in mind is that the words are, as we have shown, figure. Man applied this image of breathing and growing, taken from his own life, to all which he perceived, all from which he felt an effect; and pronounced it all to be

living too. The words, therefore, which appear to tell us something about the life and nature of all things, do in fact tell us nothing about any life and nature except that which breathing and growing go in some degree to constitute; the life and nature, let us say, of men, of the lower animals, and of plants. Of life or nature in other things the words tell us nothing; but figuratively invest these things with the characters of animal and vegetable life. But what do they really tell us of these things? Simply that the things have an effect upon us, that they operate.

The names themselves, then, *being* and *essence*, tell us something of the real constitution of animals and plants, but of nothing else. However, the real constitution of a thing it may happen that we know, although these names convey nothing of it and help us to it not at all. For instance, a chemist knows the constitution, say, of common ether. He knows that common ether is an assemblage of molecules each containing four atoms of carbon, ten of hydrogen, and one of oxygen, arranged in a certain order. This we may call the being or essence, the *growing* or *breath*, of common ether. That is to say, to the real constitution of a thing, when we know it, we often apply a figurative name originally suggested by the principal and prominent phenomena of our own constitution.

This in the case of bodies. When we speak of the being or essence of bodies, it may be

that we know their real constitution and give these names to it. But far oftener men say that bodies have *being*, assert that bodies *are*, without any knowledge, either actual or implied, of the real constitution of the bodies, but merely meaning that the bodies are seen, heard, touched, tasted, or smelt by us, affect our senses in some way or other. And to bodies, thus acting upon us and affecting us, we attribute being or *growing*, we say that they are or *breathe*, although we may know nothing of their constitution. But we apply to their action a figurative name originally suggested by the principal and prominent activities of our own constitution.

And we proceed just in the same way with what are not bodies. Men abstract, say, from a number of brave and self-denying actions, which have come within their experience, the quality which in these actions strikes them. Some men abstract inexactly and ill what they thus perceive, others exactly and well. But whether they abstract it exactly or inexactly, alike they talk of the *being* of what they have thus abstracted; alike they say that courage and duty have *growing* or being, alike they assert that courage and duty *breathe* or are. They apply to the working of their abstraction figurative names, drawn originally from the principal and prominent workings of their own life.

Or, again, they become aware of a law of

nature, as it is called,—of a certain regular order in which it is proved, or thought to be proved, that certain things happen. To this law, to the law, let us suppose, of gravitation, they attribute *being*; they say that the law of gravitation is, exists, *breathes*, *steps forth*. That is, they give to the regularly ordered operation which they perceive, figurative names borrowed from the principal and prominent functions of their own life.

Or, finally, they become aware of a law of nature which concerns their own life and conduct in the highest degree,—of an eternal not ourselves that makes for righteousness. For this is really a law of nature, collected from experience, just as much as the law of gravitation is; only it is a law of nature which is conceived, however confusedly, by very many more of mankind as affecting them, and much more nearly. But it has its origin in experience, it appeals to experience, and by experience it is, as we believe, verified. A writer whom we name with esteem because he has so firmly grasped the truth, that what Jesus Christ cared for was to change the inner man of each individual, not to establish organisations of any sort, Mr. Dunn says, that the God of popular religion, the personal God who thinks and loves, is as much verifiable by experience as our eternal power that makes for righteousness. Possibly he imagines us to mean by *power* some material

agent, some body, some gas; and such a divine agent making for righteousness is no more verifiable by experience, we confess, than a divine person, who thinks and loves, making for it. We no more pretend to know the origin and composition of the power that makes for righteousness than of the power that makes for gravitation. All we profess to have ascertained about it is, that it has effect on us, that it operates.

Some deny that it operates. *The fool hath said in his heart: There is no God.* But we maintain that experience is against the fool, that righteousness is salvation. As far as man's experience reaches, it comes out, and comes out ever more clearly, both by the operation of the law itself and by man's inward sense of affinity and response to it, that our welfare, which we cannot but pursue, is inextricably and unalterably, and by no procuring of ours but whether we will or no, dependent on conduct. Mr. Dunn does not surely think that we have the same experience of God as a person who thinks and loves, which we have of this? He says that a great many people have believed that God is a person who thinks and loves. Undoubtedly they have; just as a great many people have believed this or that hypothesis about the system of nature. But the question is, whether they had any such good grounds from experience for accepting these things as

true, as there are for accepting as true the law of gravitation and the law of righteousness, the Eternal that makes for righteousness.

It is said, again, that *eternal*,—that which never had a beginning, and can never have an end,—is a metaphysical conception not given by experience. Yes indeed, *eternal*, as that which never had a beginning and can never have an end, is, like the final substance or subject wherein all qualities inhere, a metaphysical conception to which experience has nothing to say. But eternal, *ævi-ternus*, the age or life-long, as men applied it to the Eternal that makes for righteousness, was no metaphysical conception. From all they could themselves make out, and from all that their fathers had told them, they believed that righteousness was salvation, and that it would go on being salvation from one generation of men to another. And this is the only sound sense in which we can call the law of righteousness, or the law of gravitation, or any other law which we may perceive, eternal. From all that we hear or can make out it holds good; and we believe, therefore, that it will go on holding good.

Well, then, men become aware from experience,—that source of all our knowledge,—they become aware of a law of righteousness. And to this law they attribute *being*. They say that the law of conduct, the eternal not ourselves which makes for righteousness, is,

exists,—*breathes, steps forth.* That is to say, they give to the steadfast, unchanging, widely and deeply working operation which they perceive, figurative names borrowed from the principal and prominent operations of their own life.

Being and *essence* men in this way attribute to what they perceive, or think they perceive, to be a law of nature. But, long before they perceive it as a law of nature, they dimly and obscurely are conscious of its working; they feel its power by many a sharp lesson. And imagination coming in to help, they make it, as they make everything of which they powerfully feel the effect, into a human agent, at bottom like themselves, however much mightier, —a human agent that feels, thinks, loves, hates. So they made the sun into a human being; and even the operation of chance, fortune. And what should sooner or more certainly be thus made into a human being, but far mightier and more lasting than common man, than the operation which affects men so widely and deeply,—for it is engaged with conduct, with at least three-fourths of human life,—the *not ourselves* that makes for righteousness?

Made into a human being this was sure to be, from its immense importance, its perpetual intervention. But this does not make the personifying, anthropomorphic process, the less the explanation of the attributed human qualities in this case, than it is the explanation of them

in others. Yet we will have it, very many of us, that the human qualities are in the one case really there and inherent, but in all the other cases they are the mere work of man's plastic and personifying power. What was the Apollo of the religion of the Greeks? The law of intellectual beauty, the eternal not ourselves that makes for intellectual beauty. By a natural and quite explicable working of the human spirit, a heightened, glorified human being, thinking and loving, came to stand for the operation of this power. Who doubts this? But the thinking and loving Apollo of the Greeks, and every other example of the like kind except one, this natural working of the human spirit is supposed to explain; only the thinking and loving Jehovah of the Hebrews shall not be explained by this working, but a person who thinks and loves he really is!

To return, then, to our much-abused primitives. What is the conclusion of the whole matter about them? It is this:—They were supposed to give us for conscious intelligence, for thinking and loving, a basis or subject independent of bodily constitution. They do in fact give us nothing beyond bodily phenomena; but they transfer by a figure the phenomena of our own bodily life to all law and operation. On a fine and subtle scale they still carry on that personifying anthropomorphic process, native in man and ineradicable, which

in all the early religions of the world we can see going forward on a scale gross and palpable.

So it appears, that when we talk of the *being* of things, we use a fluid and literary expression, not a rigid and scientific one. And in every case where anything is made to depend upon the use of the words *is* and *be*, we ought to examine what is said, and see what sense they can really, in that particular case, bear. For instance, Descartes says, that what makes him certain of the truth of his fundamental proposition, 'I think, therefore I am, *Je pense, donc je suis*,' is that he sees quite clearly that in order to think one must be:—'*Pour penser il faut être*.' And *être* really means to breathe; and we do, indeed, see quite clearly that, in order to think, we must breathe. And this is the clearest sense the words can have. Nevertheless, it is not the sense Descartes meant to give them. Well, then, they can also bear the sense that because we think, we feel ourselves to be alive. And probably this is what Descartes alleges that he and all of us can see quite clearly. So when philosophers tell us, in their grand language, that 'from our actual thought we affirm our actual existence,' let us simple people interpret, and say, that this means that because we think, we feel ourselves to be alive; and let us concede, with due admiration for those who clothe the thing in such imposing language, that we can clearly see this also to be true. Only let us remember exactly what it is that we

have seen to be true. And when the philosophers go on to tell us, further, that 'as we affirm our actual existence from our actual thought, similarly, the idea we have of the infinite and infinitely perfect Being, that is, of God, clearly involves his actual existence'; let us again put the thing into easier language, and propound it to ourselves that as, because we think, we feel ourselves to be alive, similarly, because we think of God, God feels himself to be alive. Probably we shall not be disposed to concede that we can clearly see this to be true; nor, perhaps, would the philosophers allege it as certain, if they had accustomed themselves to inquire in all cases what *being*, *existing*, really mean.

V

Armed with this key of the real signification of our two poor little words, *is* and *be*, let us next boldly carry the war into the enemy's country, and see how many strong fortresses of the metaphysicians, which frown upon us from their heights so defiantly, we can now enter and rifle. For *is* and *be*, we have learnt, either mean *breathe* and *grow*, or else they mean *operate*. But when the metaphysicians start with their at least certainly knowing that *something is*, they always have in their minds:—'Something thinks which neither breathes nor grows, and we know of a subject for thinking which neither breathes nor

grows, and that subject is being, *être*.' But they are unaware that being, *être*, are two words which simply mean breathing and growing. And then, with two supposed data of a cogitative substance and an incogitative substance, the metaphysicians argue away about the necessary mutual relations of these two in the production of things, and form all manner of fine conclusions. But all the knowledge they do really set out with in their *something is* amounts to this : 'We are aware of *operation*.' And this neither tells them anything about the origin and production of things, nor enables them to conclude anything.

Now, if we keep this in mind, we shall see the fallacy of many reasonings we meet with. The *Edinburgh Review* says : 'All existing things must be persons or things ; persons are superior to things ; do you mean to call God a thing ?' The ambiguity is in *things*. He who asserts this or that to be a person or a thing,—endued, that is, with what we call life or not endued with it,—pronounces something concerning its constitution. And when we pronounce that God has *being*, that God *is*, we may mean by this that God has growth, that God breathes ; and then we do assert something concerning God's constitution, and affirm God to be a person not a thing. But we may also mean, when we pronounce that God has *being*, that God *is*, simply that God operates, that the Eternal which makes for righteousness has

operation. And then we assert nothing about God's constitution whatever, we neither affirm God to be a person nor to be a thing. And, indeed, we are not at all in a position to affirm God to be either the one or the other. He who pronounces that God must be a person or a thing, and that God must be a person because persons are superior to things, talks as idly as one who should insist upon it that the law of gravitation must be either a person or a thing, and should lay down which of the two it must be. Because it is a law, is it to be pronounced a thing and not a person, and therefore inferior to persons? and are we quite sure that a bad critic, suppose, is superior to the law of gravitation? The truth is, we are attempting an exhaustive division into things and persons, and attempting to affirm that the object of our thought is one or the other, when we have no means for doing anything of the kind, when all we can really say of our object of thought is, that it *operates*.

Or to take that favourite and famous demonstration of Anselm and Descartes, that if we have the idea of a perfect being, or God,—that is to say, of an infinite substance, eternal, all-knowing, all-powerful, the creator of all things, and with every possible perfection,—then this perfect being must exist. Existence, they argue, is a perfection, and besides, our imperfect finite being could never have given to itself the idea of a perfect infinite being. But we have this idea

quite clearly and distinctly, and therefore there must exist some other being besides ourselves from whom we must have received it. All this, again, tumbles to pieces like a house of cards the moment we press it. The ambiguity lies in the words *perfect being*, *infinite substance*. Of a *not ourselves* we are clearly aware; — but a clear idea of an infinite substance, a perfect being, knowing and thinking and yet not breathing and growing? And this idea we could not have given to ourselves, because it is a clear idea of an infinite substance, full of perfection; and we are a finite substance, full of imperfection? But after examining *is* and *be*, we are sure that no man has a clear idea of an infinite substance, knowing and thinking. And the idea which he thus describes is an idea which, in the only state wherein he really has it, he may perfectly well have given to himself. For it is an idea of a man hugely magnified and improved.

The less and more in ourselves of whatever we account good, gives us a notion of what we call perfection in it. We have degrees of pleasure and we talk of perfect, infinite pleasure; we have some rest, and we talk of perfect, infinite rest; we have some knowledge, and we talk of perfect, infinite knowledge; we have some power, and we talk of perfect, infinite power. What we mean is, a great deal of pleasure, rest, knowledge, power; as much of them as we can imagine, and without the many

lets and hindrances to them which we now experience. Our idea of a perfect being, all-knowing, all-powerful, is just like that idea of a myriagon, of which Descartes himself speaks somewhere. Of a pentagon, or five-sided figure, we have a distinct idea. And we talk of our idea of a myriagon, or ten-thousand-sided figure, too; but it is not a clear idea, it is an idea of something very big, but confused. Such is our idea of an infinite substance, all-knowing, all-powerful. Of a bounded man, with some knowledge and power, we have a distinct idea; of an unbounded man, with all knowledge and all power, our idea is not clear; we have an idea of something very wise and great, but confused. And granting that clear ideas prove themselves, this alleged clear and distinct idea of an infinite substance, all-knowing and all-powerful, is one of those cases where an idea is fancied to be clear and distinct when it is not.

But people insist that perfect ideas *must* have being quite independently of us and our experience, and must inhere, therefore, in a source, a subject, an infinite substance, which is God. For we have, say they, the idea of a perfect circle; yet this idea cannot be given us by experience, because in nature there is no such thing as a perfect circle. We have the idea of a perfect good; yet this idea cannot be given us by experience, because in nature there is no such thing as a perfect good. But let us ask

ourselves whether even the circle and the triangle were first, probably, pure conceptions in the human mind, and then applied to nature? or whether these forms were not first observed in nature, and then refined into pure conceptions? And was perfect good, in like manner, or perfect beauty, first a pure conception in the human mind, and then applied to things in nature? or were things more or less good and beautiful first observed in experience, and goodness and beauty then refined into pure conceptions? Because, in that case, our ideas of a perfect circle and a perfect good are simply the imagination of a still rounder circle and a still better good than any which we have yet found in experience. But experience gave us the ideas, and we have no need to invent something out of experience as the source of them.

Finally, let us take the grand argument from design. Design, people say, implies a designer. The ambiguity lies in the little termination *er*, by which we mean a *being* who designed. We talk of a being, an *être*, and we imagine that the word gives us conscious intelligence, thinking and loving, without bodily organisation; but it does not. It gives us one of two things only;—either it gives us breathing and growing, or it gives us effect and operation. Design implies a designer? Human design does; it implies the presence of a being who breathes and thinks. So does that of the lower animals, who, like man

himself, breathe, and may be said to think. A very numerous class of works we know, which man and the lower animals make for their own purposes. When we see a watch or a honeycomb we say: It works harmoniously and well, and a man or a bee made it. But a yet more numerous class of works we know, which neither man nor the lower animals have made for their own purposes. When we see the ear, or see a bud, do we say: It works harmoniously and well, and a man or one of the lower animals made it? No; but we say: It works harmoniously and well, and an infinite eternal substance, an all-thinking and all-powerful being, the creator of all things, made it. Why? Because it works harmoniously and well. But its working harmoniously and well does not prove all this; it only proves that it works harmoniously and well. The well and harmonious working of the watch or the honeycomb is not what proves to us that a man or a bee made them; what proves this to us is, that we know from experience that men make watches and bees make honeycombs. But we do not know from experience that an infinite eternal substance, all-thinking and all-powerful, the creator of all things, makes ears and buds. We know nothing about the matter, it is altogether beyond us. When, therefore, we are speaking exactly, and not poetically and figuratively, of the ear or of a bud, all we have a right to say is: It works harmoniously and well.

VI

We besought those who could receive neither the miracles of popular theology nor the metaphysics of learned theology, not to fling away the Bible on that account, but to try how the Bible went if they took it without either the one or the other, and studied it without taking anything for granted but what they could verify. But such indignant and strenuous objection was made in the religious world to this proposal, and in particular it was so emphatically asserted that the only possible basis for religion is to believe that God is a person who thinks and loves, that the readers of *Literature and Dogma* who had taken our advice and had begun to find profit from it, might well be supposed to feel alarm and to hesitate, and to ask whether, after all, they were doing well in following our recommendation. So we had to look again at the reasons for laying down as the foundation of religion the belief that God is a person who thinks and loves. And we found reasons of two kinds alleged : reasons drawn from miracles, and reasons drawn from metaphysics. But the reasons from miracles we found, after looking at miracles again, that we could not rely on, that fail us sooner or later they surely must. And now we find the same thing with the reasons drawn from metaphysics.

The reasons drawn from miracles one cannot but dismiss with tenderness, for they belong to a great and splendid whole,—a beautiful and powerful fairy-tale, which was long believed without question, and which has given comfort and joy to thousands. And one abandons them with a kind of unwilling disenchantment, and only because one must.

The reasons drawn from metaphysics one dismisses, on the other hand, with sheer satisfaction. They have convinced no one, they have given rest to no one, they have given joy to no one. People have swallowed them, people have fought over them, people have shown their ingenuity over them; but no one has ever enjoyed them. Nay, no one has ever really understood them. No one has ever fairly grasped the meaning of what he was saying, when he laid down propositions about finite and infinite substance, and about God's essence involving existence. Yet men of splendid ability have dealt in them. But the truth is, the reasons from metaphysics for the Divine Personality got their real nourishment and support out of the reasons from miracles. Through long ages the inexperience, the helplessness, and the agitation of man made the belief in a magnified and non-natural man or men, in etherealised men,—in short, in preternatural beings of some sort or other,—inevitable. And, the preternatural having been supposed to be certainly

there, the metaphysics, or science of things coming after natural things and no longer natural, had to come in to account for it. But the miracles proving to be an unsubstantial ground of reliance, the metaphysics will certainly not stand long. Now, an unsubstantial ground of reliance men more and more perceive miracles to be; and the sooner they quite make up their mind about it, the better for them. But if it is vain to tamper with one's understanding, to resist one's widening experience, and to try to think that from miracles one can get ground for asserting God to be a person who thinks and loves, still more vain is it to try to think one can get ground for this from metaphysics.

And perhaps we may have been enabled to make this clear to ourselves and others, because we, having no talent for abstruse reasoning and being known to have none, were not ashamed, when we were confronted by propositions about essence and existence, and about infinite substance having undoubtedly more objective reality than finite substance, we were not ashamed, I say, instead of assenting with a solemn face to what we did not understand, to own that we did not understand it, and to seek humbly for the meaning of the little words at the bottom of it all; and so the futility of all the grand superstructure was revealed to us. If the German philosopher, who writes to us from Texas reproaching us with wasting our time over the Bible and

Christianity, 'which are certainly,' says he, 'disappearing from heart and mind of the cultured world,' and calling us to the study of the great Hartmann, will allow us to quote the Bible yet once more, we should be disposed to say that here is a good exemplification of that text: '*Mansueti delectabuntur;* The meek-spirited shall be refreshed.'

But to our reader and to ourselves we say once again, as to the metaphysics of current theology, what we said as to its miracles. When we have made out their untrustworthiness, we have as yet achieved nothing, except to get rid of an unsafe stay which would inevitably have sooner or later broken down with us. But to use the Bible, to enjoy the Bible, remains. We cannot use it, we cannot enjoy it, more and more amongst us, if its use and enjoyment require one first to take for granted something which cannot possibly be verified. Whether we will or not, this is so; and more and more will mankind, the religious among them as well as the profane, find themselves in this case. 'In good truth,' said Pascal to the Jesuits, 'the world is getting mistrustful, and no longer believes things unless they are evident to it.' In the seventeenth century, when Pascal said this, it had already begun to be true; it is getting more widely true every day. Therefore we urge all whom the current theology, both popular and learned, repels (for with those whom it does not repel

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we do not meddle), we urge them to take as their foundation in reading the Bible this account of God, which can be verified: 'God is the eternal power, not ourselves, which makes for righteousness,' instead of this other: 'God is a person who thinks and loves,' which cannot. We advise them to eschew as much as possible, in speaking about God, the use of the word *Being*, which even strict thinkers are so apt to use continually without asking themselves what it really means. The word is bad, because it has a false air of conveying some real but abstruse knowledge about God's nature, while it does not, but is merely a figure. *Power* is a better word, because it pretends to assert of God nothing more than effect on us, operation. With much of the current theology our unpretending account of God will indeed make havoc; but it will enable a man, we believe, to use and enjoy the Bible in security. Only he must always remember that the language of the Bible is to be treated as the language of letters, not science, language approximative and full of figure, not language exact.

Many excellent people are crying out every day that all is lost in religion unless we can affirm that God is a person who thinks and loves. We say, that unless we can verify this, it is impossible to build religion successfully upon it; and it cannot be verified. Even if it could be shown that there is a low degree of probability

t, we say that it is a grave and fatal error to gine that religion can be built on what has w degree of probability. However, we do think it can be said that there is even a low ee of probability for the assertion that God person who thinks and loves, properly and urally though we may make him such in language of feeling; the assertion deals with at is so utterly beyond us. But we maintain, t, starting from what may be verified about d,—that he is the Eternal which makes for hteousness,—and reading the Bible with this a to govern us, we have here the elements for religion more serious, potent, awe-inspiring, and profound than any which the world has yet seen. True, it will not be just the same religion which prevails now; but who supposes that the religion now current can go on always, or ought to go on? Nay, and even of that much-decried idea of God as *the stream of tendency by which all things fulfil the law of their being*, it may be said with confidence that it has in it the elements of a religion new, indeed, but in the highest degree hopeful, solemn, and profound. But our present business is not with this. Our present business is with the religion of the Bible; to show a new aspect of this, wherein it shall appear true, winning, and commanding.

And if our reader has for a time to lose sight of this aspect amid negations and conflicts,—

necessary negations, conflicts without which the ground for a better religion cannot be won, —still by these waters of Babylon, let him remember Sion! After a course of Liberal philosophers proposing to replace the obsolete Bible by the enouncement in modern and congenial language of new doctrines which will satisfy at once our reason and imagination, and after reading these philosophers' grand conclusion that there is little indeed in the history and achievements of Christianity to support the claim made on its behalf to the character of a scheme divinely revealed for the salvation of the human race, a man may of a truth well say: '*My soul hath dwelt among them that are enemies unto peace!*' and may with longing remember Sion. But we will not quarrel with him if he says and does the same thing after reading us, too, when we have kept him so long at the joyless task of learning what not to believe. But happily this part of our business is now over. In what follows, we have to defend ourselves, and secure him, against the Liberal philosophers who accuse us of teaching him to believe too much.

CHAPTER III

THE GOD OF EXPERIENCE

AMONG German critics of the Bible, a sort of criticism which we may best, perhaps, describe as a *mechanical* criticism, is very rife. For negative purposes this criticism is particularly useful. It takes for granted that things are naturally all of a piece and follow one uniform rule; and that to know that this is so, and to judge things by the light of this knowledge, is the secret for sure criticism. People do not vary; people do not contradict themselves; people do not have under-currents of meaning; people do not divine. If they are represented as having said one thing to-day and its seeming opposite to-morrow, one of the two they are credited with falsely. If they are represented as having said what in its plain literal acceptation could not hold good, they cannot have said it. If they are represented as speaking of an event before it happened, they did not so speak of it, —the words are not theirs. Things too, like persons, must be rigidly consistent, must show

no conflicting aspects, must have no flux and reflux, must not follow a slow, hesitating, often obscure line of growth ; no, the character which we assign to them they must have always, altogether, and unalterably, or it is not theirs.

This mechanical character strongly marked a criticism in the *Westminster Review* upon *Literature and Dogma*. The reviewer's line ran as follows :—'Israel's first conception of God was that of an unseen but powerful foe, whose enmity might be averted by the death of victims' ; therefore the God of Israel cannot have been, as we represent him, the Eternal which makes for righteousness. 'The original and current idea of righteousness in Israel was largely made up of ceremonial observances' ; we must not say, therefore, that to Israel was revealed the Eternal that loveth righteousness. We, again, say that the world cannot do without the Bible, and we desire to bring the masses to use the Bible. But no ! Israel went to ruin, and Christendom is far from perfect ; therefore the Bible cannot be of much use. 'Take,' says the *Westminster* Reviewer, 'the commentary afforded by Israel's history on the value of the Bible ! The Bible failed to turn the hearts of those to whom it was addressed ; how can it have an efficacy for the regeneration of our masses ?' In a like strain the author of *Supernatural Religion :* 'There is little, indeed, in the history and actual achievements of Christianity to support

the claim made on its behalf to the character of a scheme divinely revealed for the salvation of the human race.'

On persons and their sayings this sort of criticism does execution in very short and sharp fashion. Jesus said of the daughter of Jairus: 'She is not dead, but sleepeth.' Well, then, 'we have here, by the express declaration of Jesus, a case of mere suspension of consciousness.' Jesus said, *sleepeth;* and how, then, *can* the girl have been more than asleep? If Jesus is reported to have said: 'Before Abraham was, I am,' or to have said: 'Therefore doth my Father love me because I lay down my life that I may take it again,' these speeches *must* have been invented for him after his death, when the Resurrection had become a matter of Christian belief, or when the dogma of the Godhead of the Eternal Son wanted proving. That they should have arisen in any other way is 'wholly inexplicable.' It is 'wholly inexplicable' to this kind of criticism that Jesus should have both said of the Gentile centurion: 'I have not found so great faith in Israel,' and also said to the Canaanitish woman: 'It is not meet to take the children's bread and cast it to the dogs,' because the two sayings show a different tendency, and the same man does not utter two sayings showing a different tendency. Either the first saying must have been put into the mouth of Jesus by a Pauline universalist, or the second by a Judaic particularist. If Jesus

speaks of the destruction of Jerusalem, then the speech must have been invented for him after Jerusalem was destroyed; for it is 'wholly inexplicable' that a man should speak of a thing before it happens. To suppose otherwise, to suppose, as we do, that Jesus foretold to his disciples that they should see Jerusalem destroyed, that he varied his line according to the occasion and the hearer, that he foresaw his own death, and that he dealt with the terms *living* and *dying* in a profound manner easily misapprehended,—to suppose all this is to 'invest Jesus with attributes of prescience and quasi-omniscience which we can only characterise as divine,' and is therefore inadmissible.

One of the many reproaches brought against *Literature and Dogma* is, that its conception of the development of our religion is wanting in vigour and rigour. Certainly the sort of criticism we are now noticing does not err by want of vigour and rigour. It has abundance of both, and it does its work with great thoroughness. The only thing to be said against it is, that the growth of human things, and above all of immense concerns like religion, does not exactly proceed with vigour and rigour; rather it follows an order of development loose and wavering. And to impose, therefore, on the growth of religion and Christianity a method of development of great vigour and rigour, to criticise its productions and utterances with the

notion that we shall reach the truth about them by applying to them such a method, is most probably to criticise them all wrong.

And it would not be difficult to show that this method is, in fact, fallacious in each of the points where we have been just now seeing it draw its conclusions. But we are here solely concerned with whatever may be supposed to check and disconcert the reader of *Literature and Dogma* after that book had seemed to put him in a way of reading the Bible with profit. Now certainly nothing could check and disconcert him so much as to find that the God of Israel, the God of the Bible, cannot be taken to be the Eternal that loveth righteousness. For in place of the magnified and non-natural man given by miracles and metaphysics, but who cannot be verified, we had advised our reader to take as the God of the Bible, and the foundation of the whole matter of his Christianity, the Eternal that loves righteousness, makes for righteousness. This Eternal can be verified indeed, but now we are told that he is not the God of the Bible. Or, at any rate, he is not the God of Israel and of the Old Testament; the God of Israel and of the Old Testament is something quite different. This objection, then, we must deal with, and must establish in spite of it, if we can, our assertion that the God of Israel and of the Bible is the Eternal that makes for righteousness.

II

The *Westminster* Reviewer objects to us that 'Israel must have had a faculty for abstract thought quite unparalleled if his conception of a God came to pass as Mr. Arnold describes it. A people in a very early stage of civilisation is so deeply absorbed in the study and practice of morality that they discover that there is a law, which is not themselves, which makes for it, which law they proceed to worship! Can improbability go further!' This, says the Reviewer, is the *a priori* argument against 'the opinion that Israel's God was not a person, but the deification of a natural law.' But certainly we do not opine,—and the reader of *Literature and Dogma* will hardly have supposed us to opine,—that Israel's God was the *conscious* deification of a natural law. To attack, therefore, the improbability of this, is merely to tilt against a phantom of one's own creating. Unquestionably, that Israel, as we see him in the earliest documents of the Old Testament, should have been likely to sit down and say to himself: 'I perceive a great natural law, the law of righteousness, ruling the world; I will personify this law as a God,—the one and only God; I will call it Jehovah, build a sanctuary for it, and invent a worship for it';—that this should have happened is utterly improbable. One can almost

as well conceive Israel saying that he was aware of the law of gravitation, and felt disposed to deify it and to erect a temple to it.

But if one has certain facts before one, one naturally asks oneself how they can have come about. Israel is always saying that in the Eternal he puts his trust, and that this Eternal is righteous, and loves righteousness. He is always saying that among the gods of other people there is no God like the Eternal, none that can do what the Eternal does, and that whoever runs after another God shall have great trouble. These are his ruling thoughts. Where did he get them? They were given him, says popular theology, by a magnified and non-natural man, who was in constant communication with him, walked in the garden where he was, talked to him, showed him even, on one occasion, his bodily parts, and worked miracle after miracle for him. And this is Israel's own account of the matter. But how many other religions also, besides Israel's, present us with personages of this kind! And we hold that the personages are not real, but have their origin in the play of the human imagination itself. How, then, did the God of Israel, with the special characters that we find in him, actually arise?

Now, it may be contended either that these special characters, which we assign to him, are not really there; or that they have come there by chance, and nothing can be inferred from

them ; or, finally, both that the characters are there, and that it was the pressure upon the mind of Israel which made him give to his religion, and to his Eternal, that unique type which we profess to find in them. Let us examine these alternatives, so important to the reader of *Literature and Dogma*.

We must go to Sir John Lubbock or to Mr. Tylor for researches concerning what is called 'prehistoric man,' human nature in its inchoate, embryo, and as yet unformed condition. Their researches concerning this are profoundly interesting. But for our present business we have not to go back higher than historic man,—man who has taken his ply, and who is already much like ourselves. With inchoate, prehistoric man, the great objects of nature and the pleasure or pain which he experienced from them may probably enough have been the source of religion. In those times arose his name for God : *The Shining*. So may have originally commenced the religion of even the most famous races,—the religion of Greece, the religion of Israel. But into the thoughts and feelings of man in this inchoate stage we cannot, as we now are, any longer fully enter. We cannot really participate in them ; the religion of man in this stage does not practically concern us. Man's religion practically concerns us from that time only when man's real history has commenced ; when moral and intellectual conceptions have invaded the

primordial nature-worship, have, in great measure, superseded it, and given a new sense to its nomenclature. The very earliest Bible-religion does not go higher than a time of this kind, when already moral and intellectual conceptions have entered into religion. And no one will deny that, from the very first, those conceptions which are moral rather than intellectual,—the idea of conduct and of the regulation of conduct,—appear in Bible-religion prominently.

Let us for a moment leave Bible-religion, and let us turn to the people who, after the Hebrews, have had most influence upon us,—to the Greeks. Greek history and religion begin for us, as do the religion and history of the Hebrews, at a time when moral and intellectual ideas have taken possession of the framework given originally, it may be, by nature-worship. The great names of Hellenic religion, Zeus and Phœbus, come, as every one knows, from the sun and air, and point to a primordial time of nature-worship. But Greek history and religion begin with the sanctuaries of Tempe and of Delphi, and with the Apolline worship and priesthood which in those sanctuaries under Olympus and Parnassus established themselves. The northern sanctuary of Tempe soon yielded to Delphi as the centre of national Hellenic life and of Apolline religion. Now, we all are accustomed to think of Apollo as the awakener and sustainer of genius, as the

power illuminating and elevating the soul through intellectual beauty. And so from the very first he was. But in those earliest days of Hellas, and at Delphi, where the hardy and serious tribes of the Dorian Highlands made their influence felt, Apollo was not only the nourisher of genius,—he was also the author of every higher moral effort. He was the prophet of his father Zeus, in the highest view of Zeus, as the source of the ideas of moral order and of right. For to this higher significance had Zeus and Phœbus,—those names derived merely from sun and air,—by this time risen. They had come to designate a Father, the source of the ideas of moral order and of right; and a Son, his prophet, purifying and inspiring the soul with these ideas, and also with the idea of intellectual beauty.

But it is with the ideas of moral order and of right that we are at this moment concerned. These ideas are in human nature; but they had, says the excellent historian of Greece, Dr. Curtius, 'especially been a treasure in the possession of the less gay and more solitary tribes in the mountains of Northern Greece.' These were Delphi's first pupils. And the graver view of life, the thoughts which give depth and solemnity to man's consciousness,—the moral ideas, in short, of conduct and righteousness,—were the main elements of early Greek religion. *Soberness* and *righteousness*, to which the words written up on

the temple at Delphi called all comers,[1] were thus the primal rule of Hellenic religion. For a long while, in the great poets of Hellas, the power of this influence shows itself. From Pindar, Æschylus, and Sophocles, may be quoted sentences as religious as those which we find in Job or Isaiah. And here, in this bracing air of the old religion of Delphi,—this atmosphere of ideas of moral order and of right,—the Athenians, Ionian as they were, imbibed influences of character and steadiness, which for a long while balanced their native vivacity and mobility, distinguished them profoundly from the Ionians of Asia, and gave them men like Aristides and Pericles.

Every one knows, however, that this archaic severeness of Hellenic religion, this early preoccupation with conduct and righteousness, did not last. There were elements of mobility and variety in men's dispositions which proved fatal to it. The manner in which this came about we have not here to trace; all we are now concerned with is the fact that it was so. It had come to be so even by the time when, with the Persian War, the brilliant historic period of Greece begins. Even by this time the living influence of Delphi had ceased. Bribes had discredited its sanctity; seriousness and vital power had left it. Delphi had come

[1] See Plato, *Erastae*, cap. vii.—*τοῦτ' ἄρα, ὡς ἔοικε, τὸ ἐν Δελφοῖς γράμμα παρακελεύεται, σωφροσύνην ἀσκεῖν καὶ δικαιοσύνην.*

to be little more than a name, and what continued to exist there was merely a number of forms. The predominance, for Hellas, of a national religion of righteousness, of grave ideas of conduct, moral order, and right, outweighing all other ideas, disappeared with the decline of Delphi, never to return. Still, indeed, these ideas inspired poetry; and Greek poetry was now more religious than Greek religion, and partly supplied its place. Finally, they ceased even to inspire poetry, and took refuge with philosophic thinkers.

We by no means say that they disappeared from life. They are, we repeat, in human nature; they cannot disappear wholly. But a religion founded on them, a religion of soberness and righteousness, ceased to be set up before the eyes of all men, ceased to stand in the minds of all men for the great primary concern of human life, as it had stood before the minds of the grave forefathers of Hellas in the shadow of their Parnassian sanctuary. And to this extent, of course, the ideas were weakened and effaced in life;—that they were no longer impressively presented as life's first concern by a national religion, itself the great and solemn centre of men's thoughts. We by no means, again, say that for this there were no compensations. Other aspects of life presented themselves than the aspect in which life appears exclusively concerned with soberness

and righteousness. Many a line of activity did these new aspects suggest to the Hellenic genius, and with what brilliant success it followed them we all know. Still, the fact remains. In Greece, as the national history went on, the all-importance of conduct and righteousness pressed no longer upon the Hellenic spirit, and upon Hellenic religion, as their omnipresent and central idea. In the later days of the national life of Hellas it was a religious solemnity, witnessed with transport and celebrated by the first artist of the time, to see the courtesan Phryne enter the sea at Eleusis, and represent there, to an innumerable multitude of spectators, *Venus Anadyomene*,—Venus issuing from the waves.[1] To this had come the religion of Delphi and the art of Olympia. And it was at Eleusis that this happened, the old seat of the mysteries;—those highest means possessed by Greek religion for deepening and ennobling men's thoughts about life and death. The time had been when the religious solemnities at Eleusis were of a character to draw from Pindar a strain such as we now call Biblical,—a strain like that of Job, or Isaiah, or the Psalms. 'Blessed is the man who hath beheld these things before he goeth under the earth! he knoweth the end of man's life, and he knoweth its God-given beginning.'

[1] See Athenæus, lib. xiii. p. 590.

III

Not long after Phryne's religious performance at Eleusis came the last days, too, of the national life of the Jews, under the successors of Alexander. The religious conceptions of the Jews of those days are well given by the Book of Daniel. How popular and prevalent these conceptions were, is proved by their vitality and power some two centuries later at the Christian era, and by the large place which they fill in the New Testament. We are all familiar with them; with their turbid and austere visions of the Ancient of Days on his throne, and of the Son of Man coming with the clouds of heaven to give the kingdom to the saints of the Most High, and to bring in everlasting righteousness. Here, then, is the last word of the religion of the Hebrews, when their natural life is coming to an end, when their career has been, for the most part, run; when their religion has had nearly all the development which, within the limits of their national life, belonged to it. This, we say, is its last word: *To bring in everlasting righteousness.*[1]

Let us now go back to the commencement of Hebrew history. The beginnings of Hebrew national life may not inaptly be paralleled with the beginnings of Greek national life,—with

[1] Dan. ix. 24.

that epoch when the infant Hellenic tribes met in federation under the religious shadow of Tempe or Delphi, and set before their eyes the law of 'soberness and righteousness.' Such an epoch in the career of the Hebrew race is well given by the history of Abraham. The religion of Abraham, this founder and father of the Hebrew people, is a religion, as King Abimelech says, of 'integrity of heart and innocency of hands.'[1] The God of Abraham has chosen Abraham and his race, because, God says: 'I know Abraham, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Eternal to do righteousness and judgment.'[2] So that the Hebrew people and Hebrew history, when they begin, begin, like the Hellenic people and like Hellenic history, with a religion of soberness and righteousness. And the after-decline of this religion in Greece we have seen. But in Judæa, at the close of the national history, what do we find to be the condition of this religion? Has it weakened, has it grown obsolete, has it fallen out of sight and out of mind? So far from it, that it has grown into an enthusiasm, turbid, passionate, absorbing, and all-pervasive, to *bring in everlasting righteousness.*

How was the long intervening period filled between the call of Abraham at the beginning

[1] Gen. xx. 5. [2] Gen. xviii. 19.

of Israel's national history, and the Book of Daniel at its close? Let us take, as a mid-point, that wonderful collection, ranging over so many years, reflecting so many experiences, contributed by so many voices, and answering so profoundly to the religious consciousness of Israel: the Book of Psalms. Two things are equally manifest, on the very face of the Book of Psalms,—Israel's attachment to his religion, and that religion's character. One may dip into the Psalms where one will, and be sure to find them not far off.

First, as to the attachment and strong reliance with which Israel's religion inspired him. 'In the Eternal put I my trust,'[1] is the constant burden of his song. 'My hope hath been in thee, O Eternal; I have said, Thou art my God!' 'Blessed are the people whose God is the Eternal!' 'They who run after another God shall have great trouble.'[2]

And then as to the character, expressed briefly and generally, of this God of Israel, this Eternal. There is really no doubt about it. 'The Eternal loveth the thing that is right!'[3] Ten thousand variations are played on the one theme, but the theme is that. 'The Eternal alloweth the *righteous*, but the *wicked* his soul hateth,'[4] says David. 'Unto the ungodly saith God: Why dost thou take

[1] Ps. xi. 1.
[2] Ps. xxxi. 14; xxxiii. 12; xvi. 4.
[3] Ps. xxxvii. 28.
[4] Ps. xi. 5.

my covenant in thy mouth, whereas thou hatest to be *reformed?*'[1] 'My help cometh of God, who preserveth them that are *true of heart.*'[2] 'I will wash my hands in *innocency*, O Eternal, and so will I go to thine altar.'[3] As in the days of Abimelech, so it was still: the religion of the Hebrew people was a religion of integrity of heart and innocency of hands. 'Put thou thy trust in the Eternal, and be *doing good.*'[4] 'If I incline unto *wickedness* with my heart, the Eternal will not hear me.'[5] No; for this is the essential character of Israel's Eternal, to love the thing that is *right*, to abhor that which is *evil.*

Do we want a somewhat fuller account of what *right* is, that we may be sure it does not mean a mere performance of ceremonies? Here it is:—'Come, ye children, and hearken unto me; I will teach you the fear of the Eternal. Keep thy tongue from evil, and thy lips that they speak no guile; eschew evil and do good, seek peace and pursue it.'[6] Or of what *evil* is,—what is the course of those who do not 'understand and seek after God'; that we may be sure evil does not mean a mere omission of ceremonies, or a sparing to smite God's enemies who happen to be also one's own? 'Their mouth is full of cursing and bitterness, their feet are swift

[1] Ps. l. 16, 17. [2] Ps. vii. 10. [3] Ps. xxvi. 6.
[4] Ps. xxxvii. 3. [5] Ps. lxvi. 18. [6] Ps. xxxiv. 11, 13, 14.

to shed blood, destruction and unhappiness is in their ways, and the way of peace have they not known.'[1] In a plain way, all this points well enough, and with perfect clearness, to just what we universally mean by right and wrong, good and evil. It points to morals, conduct; to a man's behaviour, way and walk in life. And this was what Israel meant by religion: to attend to one's way and walk in life, and to regulate them according to the commandments of the Eternal that loveth righteousness. 'I called mine own ways to remembrance,' he says, 'and turned my feet unto Thy testimonies.'[2] And they who do so, maintains he, 'shall want no manner of thing that is good.'[3] '*That* shall bring a man peace at the last.'[4] 'To him that ordereth his conversation right shall be shown the salvation of God.'[5]

But the *Westminster* Reviewer says that we are not to rely much on what comes from prophets and psalmists, 'on the most spiritual utterances of the most spiritual part of the nation, of men who were at once reformers and poets.' 'They were,' says he, 'innovators, unorthodox free-thinkers.' What they alleged about righteousness by no means proves that righteousness was the religion of Israel.

[1] Ps. xiv. (Prayer Book Version), 6, 7; and Rom. iii. 14-17.
[2] Ps. cxix. 59.
[3] Ps. xxxiv. 10.
[4] Ps. xxxvii. 38.
[5] Ps. l. 23.

And perhaps this sort of argument can, in some cases, be used fairly enough. Pindar may have lofty passages about the end and the God-given beginning of man's life. Socrates and Plato may have their minds still bent on those ideas of moral order and of right which were the treasure of the primitive and serious tribes of early Hellas. They may harp still upon the old-fashioned doctrines recommended from the temple at Delphi. Yet, if the Greek nation and its religion have taken quite another line, these utterances of philosophers and poets will not justify us in saying that the religion of Greece was a religion of righteousness. But we have a right to give Israel the benefit of the utterances of its prophets and psalmists. And why? Because the nation adopted them. So powerfully did the inmost chords of its being vibrate to them, so entirely were they the very truth it was born to and sought to find utterance for, that it adopted them, made them its standards, the documents of the most profound and authentic expression of the national consciousness, its religion. Instead of remaining literature and philosophy, isolated voices of sublime poets and reforming free-thinkers, these glorifications of righteousness became Jewish religion, matters to be read in the synagogue every Sabbath-day. So that while in Greece it was a religious solemnity to behold a courtesan enter the sea, in Judæa it was a religious

solemnity to hear that 'the righteous Eternal loveth righteousness.'

What we claim, then, for Israel, when we say that he had the intuition of the Eternal Power, not ourselves, that makes for righteousness, when we say that to him were entrusted the oracles of God, that to him our religion was first revealed, is this:—that the ideas of moral order and of right, which are in human nature, which appear in a recognisable shape, whatever may be their origin, as soon as man is sufficiently formed for him to have a history at all, to be intelligible to us at all, to stand related to us as showing a like nature with ourselves,—that these ideas so laid hold upon Israel as to be the master-element in his thoughts, the sheet-anchor of his life. And these ideas have such a range that they take in at least three-fourths of human life. It matters nothing that Israel could give no satisfying and scientific account of the way in which he came by these ideas; that he could only give legendary and fanciful accounts of it. It matters nothing that the practical application he gave to these ideas was extremely crude and limited, that they were accompanied in him by gross imperfection. It matters nothing that there may be shown to have hung about them any number of waifs and strays from an earlier and unripe stage, survivals from a time of nature-worship, or of any other passage which preceded, with

Israel, the entrance upon his real history. If from the time he was formed, and distinguishable, and himself, if from one end of the Bible to the other, we find him impressed, awe-struck, absorbed by the idea of righteousness, whatever alloys he may mix with it, and however blindly he may deal with it; if we find him,—and it is indisputable that we do find him,—thus fascinated, it is enough, and he has the intuition.

His very shortcomings prove the force of the intuition within him, since all the wear and tear of them could not rase it out. '*Cogitavi vias meas, et converti pedes meos in testimonia Tua;* I called mine own ways to remembrance, and turned my feet unto Thy testimonies.'[1] Israel is the great, standing, unsilenceable, unshaken witness to the necessity of minding one's ways, of conduct. And whatever else he may have done, or not done, he can assuredly plead: *Cogitavi vias meas.* 'Sacrifices work a conception in which morality has no part,' says the *Westminster* Reviewer; 'sacrifices existed in Israel *ab origine*.' Even in his historic time there hung about Israel traces of an inchoate and dark stage, remains of an early 'conception of God as an unseen but powerful foe, whose enmity might be averted by the death of victims.' It may have been so; but, 'Still,' Israel can answer, 'still, all hampered with these survivals of a lower world: *Cogitavi vias meas!*'

[1] Ps. cxix. 59.

'Though righteousness,' pursues the *Westminster* Reviewer, 'entered largely into Israel's conception of the Eternal, yet that conception contained much that conflicts with righteousness. The God of Israel often appears as more patriotic than righteous; blesses Jael, for instance, for the treacherous murder of Sisera.' True; but true, also, that with all this mixture: *Cogitavi vias meas!* 'Israel's God,' the objector goes on, 'is a magnified and non-natural man, not impassive and uniform like a law of nature, but angry and then repenting him, jealous and then soothed.' Nevertheless, with this crude anthropomorphic conception of God: *Cogitavi vias meas!* 'Israel's religion deals in ecstasy, enthusiasm, evocations of the dead.' *Cogitavi vias meas!* 'The current idea of righteousness in Israel was largely made up of ceremonial observances.' *Cogitavi vias meas!* Finally, in spite of all this thinking upon his ways, Israel misdirected them. 'The Bible,' cries the *Westminster* Reviewer, 'failed to turn the hearts of those to whom it was addressed; the commentary afforded by Israel's history on the value of the Bible!' True, as Israel managed his profession of faith, it did not save him; but did he on that account drop it? *Cogitavi, cogitavi vias meas!*

IV

The *Westminster* Reviewer will now, perhaps, understand what we mean by saying that the Hebrew people had the revelation and intuition of the Eternal that makes for righteousness. We do not mean that this people had a clear and adequate idea of rightness in conduct as a law of nature, that they then proceeded to personify this law and deify it, and that they deified it in their Jehovah. If this were what we meant, all the criticisms of the *Westminster* Reviewer upon the shortcomings of Jehovah and Jahvism in the Old Testament would take effect. But perhaps our saying that Israel had the *revelation* of the Eternal that makes for righteousness is the stumbling-block. Let us try, then, so to draw out what we mean by this, that to the Reviewer and to others it may appear as simple and certain as it does to ourselves.

For let us now conceive man, so far as this is possible for us, just as the investigation of his beginnings and the actual observation of the state of certain savages shows him to us, in his inchoate, prehistoric, almost pre-human condition. In this time of ignorance his gods have their origin. We are accused of introducing in the *not ourselves* which presses, we say, upon man's spirit, a refined metaphysical conception. It is so far from this, that it is one of the first

pieces of man's experience, and dates from the most primitive time. It is whatever appears to man as outside himself, not in his own power, and affecting him whether he will or no. Now, the more helpless and inexperienced man is, the greater is the number to him of things not in his own power. Who can trace or divine all the possibilities of hope and fear in this wide field? But we know and can easily understand how on certain great and prominent objects of nature, exercising a powerful influence on human life,—such as the sun, for instance,—hope and fear fastened, and produced worship. And we know, too, and can well understand, how by a natural impulse men were moved to represent in a human form like their own, the powers which attracted their hope, fear, and worship; as Xenophanes says that if horses, oxen, and lions could paint or model, they would certainly make gods in their own image,—horses in that of horses, oxen in that of oxen. And even when men did not represent their gods in human form, they still supposed in them human thoughts and passions.

In those times arose names like Eloah, Elohim, *The Mighty;* or Deus, God, *The Shining*. And then, too, in those days of bounded view and of apprehensive terror, grew up and prevailed 'the conception of God,' to use the *Westminster* Reviewer's words, 'as a foe whose enmity might be averted by the death of victims.' Such, he

asserts, was Israel's first conception of God; and although here he speaks positively of things beyond the ken of any certain knowledge, yet we are not concerned to dispute the probability of his conjecture, that with the inchoate and primordial Israel it may have been so. For 'the gods,' as Xenophanes again says, 'did not from the first show to men all things; but in time, by searching, men came to a discovery of the better.'

Such a 'better' was reached at a point where human history and human religion, in the only sense which our race can now attach to the word *religion*, first began. It was reached when the ideas of conduct, of moral order and of right, had gathered strength enough to declare and establish themselves. Long before, indeed, during man's chaotic and rudimentary time, these ideas must have been at work; and as they were no conscious creation of man's will, but solicited him and ripened in him whether he would or no, we may truly and fitly call them the Spirit of God brooding over chaos, moving silently upon the human deep. Then these ideas found and took possession of the framework of the older, and,—for so we may call them,—the as yet irreligious religions. In many an imagining and legend men gave voice to their half-recollection of stages and moments in man's dim ante-natal time, mixing it and colouring it with their later experience.

From the older religions were handed on ceremonial and rite, which have, in truth, their proper origin, not in the moral stirrings of man's nature at all, but in the stirrings which we call æsthetic. Many practices, even, were not at once dropped, which had their proper origin in darkness and disease of the moral feelings, in blind and pusillanimous terror. Of this kind were human sacrifices, such as Abraham's sacrifice of Isaac. Nevertheless God by the very cradle of Hebrew history, the God of Abraham, the God of 'integrity of heart and innocency of hands,' is no longer 'a foe whose enmity might be averted by the death of victims.' The God of Abraham is a *friend;* and the intended sacrifice is no longer an act of selfish terror to avert a powerful foe's enmity, it is an act of faithful devotion to the supposed will of an all-wise and all-good friend. To this extent in its very cradle did the one true religion, Israel's religion, the religion of righteousness, succeed in transforming the baneful and false usage which clung to it from the times of darkness out of which it emerged, until the day came for the disappearance of the usage altogether.

In a like 'better' did the history and religion of Hellas also, as we have seen, take their rise; a 'better' brought about by the ideas of moral order gathering strength and making themselves felt. Then the nature-deities of ruder times, Zeus and Phœbus, became the Father of judgment

and of right, and his Prophet-Son. At that moment, therefore, the Eternal who makes for righteousness, the God of Israel, who is, as St. Paul said to the Athenians, *not far from every one of us*, seemed offering to reveal himself to Greece also. But it was for a moment only. Other aspects of life than the moral aspect came into view and into favour with the Greeks; other tendencies than the tendency which disposes men to preoccupy themselves with conduct, and with its divine sanctions, prevailed. 'They did not like,' says the Hebrew Paul austerely, 'to retain God in their knowledge, and so God gave them over to a reprobate mind.'[1] This is, no doubt, a stern sentence. What the Greeks were and what they accomplished, and how brilliant a course they ran after their religion had passed out of its brief moment of accord with that of Israel, we know; and with that knowledge we shall not be forward to utter against them hard censures. But thus much, at least, we may say, notwithstanding all the glory and genius of Greece, notwithstanding all the failure and fanaticism of Israel; thus much we may well say, whenever we contrast the heart and mind of the Græco-Roman world in its maturity with the interior joys of Israel: *They that run after another God shall have great trouble.*

Israel, on the contrary, advanced from the

[1] Rom. i. 28.

God of Abraham, the Mighty who requires integrity of heart and innocency of hands, to the God of Moses, the Eternal who makes for righteousness unalterably. Then the law in its primitive shape, an organism having for its heart the Ten Commandments, arose. It formulated, with authentic voice and for ever, the religion of Israel, as a religion in which ideas of moral order and of right were paramount. And so things went on from Moses to Samuel, and from Samuel to David, and from David to the great prophets of the eighth century and to the Captivity, and from that to the Restoration, and from the Restoration to Antiochus and the invasion of Greek culture, to the Maccabees and the Book of Daniel, and from thence to the Roman conquest, and from that to John the Baptist; until all the wonderful history received its solution and consummation in Jesus Christ. Through progress and backsliding, amid infectious contact with idolatry, amid survival of old growths of superstition, of the crude practices of the past; amid multiplication of new precepts and observances, of formalism and ceremonial; amid the solicitation of new aspects of life; in material prosperity, and in material ruin; more and more the great governing characteristics of the religion of Israel accentuated and asserted themselves, and forced themselves on the world's attention: the God of this religion, with his eternal summons to keep judgment and do

justice; the mission of this religion, to bring in everlasting righteousness.

And this native, continuous, and increasing pressure upon Israel's spirit of the ideas of conduct and of its sanctions, we call his intuition of the Eternal that makes for righteousness, the revelation to him of the religion of this Eternal. Really, we do not know how else to account for the evident fact of the pressure, than by supposing that Israel had an intuitive faculty, a natural bent for these ideas; that their truth was borne in upon him, revealed to him. How else are we to explain their pressure on him? We put aside all the preternatural;—a magnified and non-natural man, walking in gardens, speaking from clouds, sending dreams, commissioning angels. We give an explanation which is natural. But we say that this natural explanation is yet grander than the preternatural one.

Some people, however, when they have got rid of the preternatural in religion, seem to think that they are bound to get rid, as much as they can, of the notion of there being anything grand and wonderful in religion at all; at any rate, to reduce this element of what is grand and wonderful to the very smallest dimensions. They err. They impede the acceptance of even the real truths which they have to tell the world, because the world feels that on the main matter they are wrong. They act imprudently, therefore; but they really fail, besides, to appreciate

and explain their facts. We have already, in *Literature and Dogma*, mentioned Professor Kuenen's explanation of the morality in Bible-religion from the simple and severe life of the primitive Beni-Israel as nomads of the desert. But whoever will read in M. Caussin de Perceval's Arabian History the Moàllacas of the poets among the Arabs before Mahomet, will find this poetry extremely licentious, in spite of the nomad life led in the desert by the Arab tribes. And the reformation of Mahomet is undoubtedly a reformation largely inspired by the Bible of the Beni-Israel. On the other hand, we find Semitic people without the nomad life, — the Semitic people of great cities, — developing a worship such as Herodotus has described to us in that of Mylitta.[1]

Professor Kuenen's excellent History is now published in English. We may all read there of a religious revival in Hebrew religion under Samson and Samuel, and how by degrees Jahvism grew in spirituality, and the age of ecstasy and of the Witch of Endor gave place to the prophets of the eighth century, conscious of a real inner call. Well, but what is the reason of all this advance, this 'development of monotheism,' as people call it? Professor Kuenen thinks that it is largely due to 'the influence of the war between Baal and Jahveh upon the minds of those who had remained loyal to Jahveh.' So,

[1] Herodotus, i. 199.

we are told, arose the deep gulf of separation between Jahveh and the heathen 'nonentities,' as the Hebrew prophets call them.

So? — but how? Not out of mere blind obstinacy, not from having fought for a God called Jahveh, against a God called Baal, so long and so hard that his champions grew bent on sticking to Jahveh, and found out all manner of perfections for him. Israel adhered to Jahveh for the same reason which had at first made him take to the worship of Jahveh: — that Jahveh was the Eternal Power that makes for righteousness, was the centre and source of those ideas of moral order and of conduct which are, we repeat, in human nature, but which pressed on Israel's spirit with extraordinary power. This alone gives us a natural, intelligible clue to the development of the religion of the Bible.

But even suppose that we reject all notion of a special bent or intuition in Israel determining the course of his religion. Suppose that we allow him to have had not one whit more bent than other people for the ideas of moral order and of right, but that his religion came to be what it was by the mere force of external circumstances and from accident. Still we shall have a religion insisting on the idea of righteousness with an energy and impressiveness absolutely unparalleled. We shall have a fact which cannot be accounted for through any intelligible process of cause and effect, and which

is due to mere chance;—but we shall have the fact all the same. In Israel's religion, far and away more than in the religion of any other ancient people, the Eternal Power that makes for righteousness is impressive and paramount. And of Israel, therefore, the distinction assigned by the word of this Eternal will hold true:—*You only have I known of all the families of the earth.*[1]

V

But now, as if it were not enough to have a *Westminster* Reviewer on one's hands, there comes a *Quarterly* Reviewer besides, and strikes his blow at *Literature and Dogma*. After some animadversions on our reasoning faculty, which are probably just, and some compliments to the clearness of our diction, which we hesitate to accept, because it is the very simplicity of our understanding that incapacitates us for the difficult style of the philosophers, and drives us to the use of the most ordinary phraseology,—after these preliminaries, the *Quarterly* Reviewer says that we have no right to call our 'enduring power, not ourselves, which makes for righteousness,' a verifiable fact at all, or to talk of Israel's intuition of it. And why? 'Because,' says the *Quarterly* Reviewer, 'the origin of the moral perceptions in man is assigned by some to intuition, by others to education, and by Mr. Darwin to

[1] Amos iii. 2.

a social instinct, arising out of evolution and inheritance.'

Let us assure the *Quarterly* Reviewer that, for our purpose, whether a man assigns the origin of the moral perceptions to intuition, or to education, or to evolution and inheritance, does not matter two straws. And really we are almost astonished at having to explain this, so clear does it seem to us. For surely, because we may choose to say that the English people have an intuitive sense for politics, we are not therefore to be understood as settling the question about the origin of political perceptions, whether they proceed from intuition, or from education, or from evolution and inheritance. Nay, and we thought that on this very point we had said in *Literature and Dogma* all that was necessary; but we find it is not so. We find a great many people imagining that if Mr. Darwin is right in assigning the origin of the moral perceptions to evolution and inheritance, in that case everything we have said about an enduring power which makes for righteousness, and about Israel's recognition of this power, must necessarily fall to the ground. Come, then, let us make it clear to the reader of *Literature and Dogma*, that these imaginations are quite vain, and that he would do very ill to be moved by them.

So let us take Mr. Darwin's doctrine and see how innocent it is, and how entirely unaffected religion is by it. But we will not take it from

the mouth of that illustrious philosopher himself, because to so many religious people he is a bugbear. Neither will we take it from M. Littré, as we did in *Literature and Dogma*, for the sake of softening a little the stern hearts of the Comtists; for M. Littré's name is not more acceptable to the religious world than Mr. Darwin's. No, we will take it from one of the clearest of thinkers, and one of the most religious of men,—Pascal. 'What is nature?' says Pascal. 'Perhaps a first habit, as habit is a second nature.' *Qu'est ce que la nature? Peut-être une première coutume, comme la coutume est une seconde nature.* Here, briefly and admirably expressed, is the famous doctrine of Mr. Darwin.

And now suppose that our moral perceptions and rules are all to be traced up, as evolutionists say, to habits due to one or other of two main instincts, — the reproductive instinct and the instinct of self-preservation. Let us take an example of a moral rule due to each instinct. For a moral rule traceable, on our present supposition, to the instinct of self-preservation, we cannot do better than to take 'the first commandment with promise': *Honour thy father and thy mother.* We say that it makes not the smallest difference to religion whether we suppose this commandment to be thus traceable or not.

For let it be thus traceable, and suppose the original natural affection of the young to their

parents to be due to a sense of dependence upon them, and of benefit from them. And then, when the dependence and benefit end, when the young can shift for themselves, the natural affection seems in the lower animals, as they are called, to pass away. But in man it is not thus evanescent. For at first, perhaps, there were some who from weakness or from accident felt the dependence and received the benefit longer than others, and in such was formed a more deep and strong tie of attachment. And while their neighbours, so soon as they were of adult vigour, heedlessly left the side of their parents and troubled themselves about them no more, and let them perish if so it might happen, these few remained with their parents, and grew used to them more and more, and finally even fed and tended them when they grew helpless. Presently they began to be shocked at their neighbours' callous neglect of those who had begotten them and borne them; and they expostulated with their neighbours, and entreated and pleaded that their own way was best. Some suffered, perhaps, for their interference; some had to fight for their parents to hinder their neighbours maltreating them; and all the more fixed in their new feelings did these primitive gropers after the Fifth Commandment become.

Meanwhile this extending of the family-bond, this conquering of a little district from the mere animal life, this limiting of the reign of blind,

selfish impulse, brought, we may well believe, more order into the homes of those who practised it, and with more order more well-doing, and with both more happiness. And when they solicited their more inhuman neighbours to change their ways, they must always have had to back them the remembrance, more or less alive in every man, of an early link of affection with his parents; but now they had their improved manner of life and heightened well-being to back them too. So the usage of the minority gradually became the usage of the majority. And we may end this long chapter of suppositions by supposing that thus there grew at last to be communities which honoured their fathers and mothers, instead of,—as, perhaps, if one went back far enough, one would find to have been the original practice,—eating them.

But all this took place during that which was, in truth, a twilight ante-natal life of humanity, almost as much as the life which each man passes in the womb before he is born. The history of man as man proper, and as distinguished from the other animals,—the real history of our race, and of its institutions,—does not begin until stages such as that which we have been describing are passed, and feelings such as that of which we have been tracing the growth are formed. Man and his history begin, we say, when he becomes distinctly conscious of feelings which, in a long preparatory period of

obscure growth, he may have been forming. Then he calls his habit, acquired by a process which he does not recollect, *nature;* and he gives effect to it in fixed customs, rules, laws, and institutions. His religion consists in acknowledging and reverencing the awful sanctions with which this right way for man has, he believes, been invested by the mighty *not ourselves* which surrounds us. And the more emphatically he places a feeling under the guardianship of these sanctions, the more impressive is his testimony to the hold it has upon him. When Israel fixed the feeling of a child's natural attachment to its parents by the commandment: *Honour thy father and thy mother, that thy days may be long in the land which the Eternal thy God giveth thee*, he showed that he had risen to regard this feeling,—slowly and precariously acquired though by our supposition it may have been,—as a sure, solid, and sacred part of the constitution of human nature.

But as well as the supposition of a moral habit and rule evolved out of the instinct of self-preservation, we are to take the supposition of a moral habit and rule evolved out of the reproductive instinct. And here, indeed, in the relations between the sexes, we are on ground where to walk right is of vital concern to men, and where disasters are plentiful. Who first, in the early and tentative up-struggling of our race, who first discerned them, this peril of disaster,

this necessity for taking heed to one's steps? Who was he, that, amid the promiscuous concubinage of man's commencements,—if we are to suppose that out of the sheer animal life human life had to evolve itself and rise,—who was he that first, through attachment to his chance companion or through attachment to his supposed offspring, gathered himself together, put a bridle on his vague appetites, marked off himself and his, drew the imperfect outline of the circle of home, and fixed for the time to come the rudiments of the family? Who first, amid the loose solicitations of sense, obeyed (for create it he did not) the mighty *not ourselves* which makes for moral order, the stream of tendency which was here carrying him, and our embryo race along with him, towards the fulfilment of the true law of their being?—became aware of it, and obeyed it? Whoever he was, he would soon have had imitators; for never was a more decisive step taken towards bringing into human life greater order, and, with greater order, greater well-doing and happiness. So the example was followed, and a habit grew up, and marriage was instituted.

And thus, again, we are brought to the point where history and religion begin. And at this point we first find the Hebrew people, with polygamy still clinging to it as a survival from the times of ignorance, but with the marriage-tie solidly established, strict and sacred, as we

see it between Abraham and Sara. Presently this same Hebrew people, with that aptitude which, we say, characterised it for being profoundly impressed by ideas of moral order, placed in the Decalogue the marriage-tie under the express and solemn sanction of the Eternal, by the Seventh Commandment: *Thou shalt not commit adultery.*

Now, we might jump at once from here to the end of Jewish history, and show Jesus Christ renewing by his method the Seventh Commandment as he did also the Fifth, renewing them and extending them, clearing casuistry and formalism away from them, and making them look as fresh and impressive in this new light as in their old light they had in Israel's best days looked to him. But let us first, after hearing Israel in the Decalogue on the relation of the sexes, take Israel in the middle of his career, as the Book of Proverbs discovers him to us. There he touches on that great and often-arising theme in what our philosophers call 'sociology': *the strange woman.* And this is his sentence on the man who is bewitched by her: *He knows not that the dead are there, and that her guests are in the depths of hell.*[1]

Now, we ask the *Quarterly* Reviewer to consider this saying of Israel, led up to by the Seventh Commandment in the earlier days of his history, and consummated by such things as

[1] Proverbs ix. 18.

the review of the Seventh Commandment by the well-known sentence of Jesus in the later.[1] Religion, we know, arises when moral ideas are touched with emotion. Now, this may be the case with moral ideas from whatever source they were at first derived. And that people, amongst whom it is the case eminently, are the chosen people of religion. We have granted the supposition that moral perceptions and habits in what concerns the relation of the sexes were originally formed for Israel, as for everybody else, by evolution and inheritance. We will grant, besides, that religious worship and many of its names and ceremonies arose out of ignorant hope and fear in man's rudimentary time. But, for us now, religion is, we say, morality touched with emotion, lit up and enkindled and made much more powerful by emotion. And when morality is thus touched with emotion, it is equally religion, whether it have proceeded from a magnified and non-natural man in the clouds, or arisen in the way we have supposed. And those in whom it appears thus touched with emotion most, are those whom we call endued with most bent for religion, most feeling, most apprehension; as one man and one race seem to turn out to have more gift,

[1] Matt. v. 27, 28. Compare: 'Not in the lust of concupiscence, *as the Gentiles who know not God*'; 'The time past may suffice us *to have wrought the will of the Gentiles* when we walked in lasciviousness,' etc.—1 Thess. iv. 5; 1 Pet. iv. 3.

without any conscious intending and willing of it, for one thing, and another man and another race for another. Now such a bent, such a feeling, when it declares itself, we call an intuition. And we say that Israel had such an intuition of religion, that he shows it in the special matter with which we are now dealing, and in others of like kind, and that this people is, therefore, the chosen people of religion.

For how does a bent or feeling of this kind for moral perceptions declare itself, when it has grown strong enough to declare itself? It declares itself by the accent and power with which its utterances are made;—the accent of conviction in the speaker himself, the power of impressiveness on those who hear him. Moral perceptions, and rules securing and establishing them, take, on the supposition we are here following, a long while to build up. There is a backwards and forwards with them; often it looks as if they would never have strength to get established at all. However, at last there comes some one like Israel, and lays down a sentence like the Seventh Commandment, and reinforces it by such deliverances as that of the Book of Proverbs, and that of the Sermon on the Mount. He thus, we say, takes a lead in what vitally concerns conduct and religion, which for ever remains to him and for ever is proving its reality.

For, again, a moral perception does not

always, and for all persons, retain the vividness it had at the moment when it established itself in a rule like the Seventh Commandment. Human nature has many sides, many impulses; our rule may seem to lose ground again, and the perception out of which it grew may seem to waver. Practice may offer to it a thousand contradictions, in what M. Taine calls the *triste défilé*, the dismal procession of the Haymarket, and in what a sage or a saint might, perhaps, in like manner call the dismal procession of the Bois de Boulogne. Not practice alone is against the old strictness of rule, but theory; we have argumentative systems of free love and of rehabilitation of the flesh. Even philosophers like Mr. Mill, having to tell us that for special reasons they had in fact observed the Seventh Commandment, think it right to add that this they did, 'although we did not consider the ordinances of society binding, on a subject so entirely personal.' So arises what these same philosophers would call a disintegration of that moral perception on which the Seventh Commandment is founded. What we have to ask, then, is: Was this perception, and the rule founded on it, really a conquest for ever, placing human nature on a higher stage; so that, however much the perception and rule may have been dubious and unfounded once, they must be taken to be certain and formed now? And whatever now makes the perception or the rule

fluctuating, does it tend, so far, not to emancipate man, but to replace him in the bondage of that old, chaotic, dark, almost ante-human time, from which slowly and painfully he had emerged when the real history and religion of our race began? And whatever, on the other hand, reinvigorates the perception, does it tend to man's freedom, safety, and progress? Because, if this is so, the accent of clear and decisive conviction in Israel's comment on the theory of Free Love is invaluable. *He knows not that the dead are there, and that her guests are in the depths of hell.*

Here, then, let us summon the most naturalistic, the freest, the calmest of observers on these matters,—Goethe. He is speaking to the Chancellor von Müller against over-facility in granting divorce. He says: 'What culture has won of nature we ought on no account to let go again, at no price to give up. In the notion of the sacredness of marriage, Christianity has got a culture-conquest of this kind, and of priceless value, although marriage is, properly speaking, unnatural.' Unnatural, he means, to man in his rudimentary state, before the fixing of moral habits has formed the right human nature. Emancipation from the right human nature is merely, therefore, return to chaos. Man's progress depends on keeping such 'culture-conquests' as the Christian notion of the sacredness of marriage. And undoubtedly this

notion came to Christianity from Israel. Such was Israel's genius for the ideas of moral order and of right, such his intuition of the Eternal that makes for righteousness, that he felt without a shadow of doubt, and said with the most impressive solemnity, that Free Love was,—to speak, again, like our modern philosophers,—fatal to progress. *He knows not that the dead are there, and that her guests are in the depths of hell.*

And now, perhaps, the *Quarterly* Reviewer will suffer us to speak of Israel's intuition of the Eternal that makes for righteousness, even though moral perceptions and habits may have originally been evolved as Mr. Darwin supposes. And the *Westminster* Reviewer will let us repeat that the word of this Eternal concerning Israel, as distinguished from every other nation of antiquity, is true, in spite of Israel's sacrifices and polygamy: *You only have I known of all the families of the earth.*

VI

Finally, a very different writer from the *Westminster* Reviewer,—M. Charles Secrétan, in the *Revue Suisse*,—is at one with the *Westminster* Reviewer in denying the possibility of basing on experimental grounds the claim of the Bible and of its religion to our acceptance. 'The Power making for righteousness,' says M. Charles Secrétan, 'the Secret of Jesus, are not really experimental notions which any man can

verify. The contrary is true. The Secret and the Power are objects of *faith* only. Experience offers every day abundant contradictions to the reality of this Power.'

Now on this point it is certainly indispensable that the reader of *Literature and Dogma* should be in no doubt. For the fundamental thesis of that book is, that righteousness is salvation verifiably, and that the secret of Jesus is righteousness verifiably; and that the true faith which the Bible inculcates is the faith that this is so. But unquestionably the common notion among religious people is M. Charles Secrétan's: that experience is altogether against the saving power of righteousness or of the secret of Jesus, but that their saving power will be proved to a man after he is dead by a great judgment, and by a system of rewards and punishments in accordance with them; and that faith is the belief that this will really happen. And unquestionably all this is taken from Israel himself, who in his latter days consoled himself, as we can see in the Book of Daniel, by the idea of a resurrection, judgment, and recompense of this sort, and for whom faith came to be the belief that it all would certainly happen.

Jesus Christ, we say, made it the great object of his teaching to clear and transform this *extra-belief* of his countrymen. Upon that, however, we will not insist now; neither will we now ourselves set about proving that experimentally

righteousness is salvation, and experimentally the secret of Jesus is righteousness, independently of the soundness or unsoundness of the *extra-belief* of Jews or Christians. On the experimental character of these truths, which are the undoubted object of religion, we have elsewhere said what is necessary. But they are the matter of an immense experience which is still going forward. It is easy to dispute them, to find things which seem to go against them; yet, on the whole, they prove themselves, and prevail more and more. And the idea of their truth is in human nature, and every one has some affinity for them, although one man has more and another less. But if any man is so entirely without affinity for them, so subjugated by the conviction that facts are clean against them, as to be unable to entertain the idea of their being in human nature and in experience, for him *Literature and Dogma* was not written.

We suppose, therefore, the reader of *Literature and Dogma* to admit the idea of these truths being in human nature and in experience. Now, we say that the great use of the Bible is to animate and fortify faith in them, against whoever says that 'experience offers every day abundant contradictions to their reality.' The truth that righteousness is salvation has double power upon mankind by the inspiration of the sublime witness borne to it by Israel in his best days. This is why these Scriptures are truly

said to be 'written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope.'[1] True, in his later days Israel had taken refuge in an ideal world to ensure the triumph of righteousness, had imagined his apocalyptic Ancient of Days to be necessary and his Son of Man coming in the clouds, his *crisis*, his *anastasis*, and his Messianic reign of the saints. All this was, in a certain way, a testimony to the ideas of moral order and of right. But Israel's best, his immortal testimony to them, is the testimony borne in his earlier days and in his prime, when his faith is in the triumph of the ideas themselves, not in a phantasmagoric restitution of all things to serve them. *As the whirlwind passeth, so is the wicked no more, but the righteous is an everlasting foundation. As righteousness tendeth to life, so he that pursueth evil pursueth it to his own death.*[2]

This imperishable faith of the true Israel, clouded in his later days, resumed and perfected by Jesus Christ, but from the first only half understood and mixed with natural errors by his disciples, makes the glory and the grandeur of the Old Testament. It has an answer,—a far better answer than any we could give,—to every objection of M. Charles Secrétan. 'The power making for righteousness is not really,' says M. Secrétan, 'an experimental notion, which any man can verify; the contrary is true.' Let Israel

[1] Rom. xv. 4. [2] Prov. x. 25; xi. 19.

answer. *The Eternal upholdeth the righteous; though he fall he shall not be cast away, for the Eternal upholdeth him with his hand. I have been young and now am old, and yet saw I never the righteous forsaken. I myself have seen the ungodly in great power, and flourishing like a green bay-tree; I went by, and lo, he was gone!*[1] 'Experience,' pursues M. Secrétan, 'offers every day abundant contradictions to the reality of this power.' What says Israel? *I should utterly have fainted, but that I believe verily to see the goodness of the Eternal in the land of the living.*[2] Israel would not allow time enough for the demonstration of his truth that righteousness is salvation; hence his later disappointments and illusions. But for any one who believes that this truth is a profound law of human nature, Israel's faith in it during his best days opens a boundless source of joy, courage, and enthusiasm; and it is a source such as no other people of antiquity offers. So that here, again, is confirmation of that unique rank emphatically assigned to Israel by the Eternal that makes for righteousness: *You only have I known of all the families of the earth.*

VII

The *Spectator* asks: How are we to know that Israel meant what he said when he pro-

[1] Ps. xxxvii. 24, 25, 35, 36. [2] Ps. xxvii. 13.

nounced righteousness to be salvation, if we contend that he did not speak literally when he brings in God talking, thinking, and loving? Surely because in the one case he is on ground of experience where we can follow him, but on the other he is not. Therefore, when he says: *There ariseth light for the righteous*,[1] his words present no difficulty, and we can take them as they stand; but when he speaks of God walking in a garden, we are driven to find for the words some other origin than his actual experience. And whoever attends to the history of the human spirit, will soon see that such an origin is not hard to find.

The *Spectator* asks, again, where in Wordsworth, whose personifying language about nature we produced to illustrate Israel's personifying language about God, we can point to language which speaks of nature in the 'mood of real expectation and confidence common in the Psalms.' Why, where Wordsworth says: *Nature never did forsake the heart that loved her*. Or where, asks the *Spectator*, can we find language which 'treats distrust in the promises of nature as a sin'? Why, in plain prose, without going to the poets for it at all; in one of the profoundest and most impressive passages to be found in Butler, in his sermon on *The Ignorance of Man*. 'If things afford to man,' says Butler, 'the least hint or intimation that

[1] Ps. xcvii. 11.

virtue is the law he is born under, scepticism itself should lead him to the most strict and inviolable performance of it; *that he may not make the dreadful experiment of leaving the course of life marked out for him by nature, whatever that nature be, and entering paths of his own, of which he can know neither the danger nor the end.*' What can be more solemn and grand? it is grand with the grandeur of Greek tragedy. But Israel had more than a hint or intimation that virtue is the law man is born under. He had an irresistible intuition of it. Therefore he breaks into joy, which Butler and Greek tragedy do not. Nevertheless, the greatness of Butler, as we hope one day to show, is in his clear perception and powerful use of a 'course of life marked out for man by nature, whatever that nature be.' His embarrassment and failure is in his attempt to establish a perception as clear, and a use as powerful, of the popular theology. But from Butler, and from his treatment of *nature* in connection with religion, the idea of following out that treatment frankly and fully, which is the design of *Literature and Dogma*, first, as we are proud to acknowledge, came to us; and, indeed, our obligations of all kinds to this deep and strenuous spirit are very great.

From our use of the proof from happiness, accusations have been brought against us of eudæmonism, utilitarianism. We are reproached, by a foreign critic, with utilitarianism, with making,

'conformably to the tradition of the English school' (the *Westminster* Reviewers will hear with astonishment what company they have been keeping !) 'self-interest the spring of human action.' Utilitarianism ! Surely a pedant invented the word; and oh, what pedants have been at work in employing it ! But that joy and happiness are the magnets to which human life inevitably moves, let not the reader of *Literature and Dogma* for a moment confuse his mind by doubting. The real objection is to low and false views of what constitutes happiness. *Pleasure* and *utility* are bad words to employ, because they have been so used as to suggest such views. But *joy* and *happiness*, on the whole, have not. We may safely say, then, that joy and happiness are the magnets to which human life irresistibly moves. The men of positive experience are for us here, but so are the chief men of religion too. St. Augustine :—'Act we *must* in pursuance of that which gives most delight.' Pascal :—'However different the means they employ, all men without exception tend towards one object,—happiness.' Barrow : —'The sovereign good, the last scope of our actions, the top and sum of our desires,—happiness.' Butler :—'It is manifest that nothing can be of consequence to mankind, or any creature, but happiness.' This truth cannot be gainsaid; and to reject the truth itself, because of frequent perversions of it, is a fatal error. From

theologians of the Unitarian school the cry against eudæmonism comes loudest. To champion anti-eudæmonism, and to champion the metaphysical personality of God, are tasks to which this school at the present moment appears to have especially addressed itself. Hardly could it give a stronger sign of that sterility in religion, to which, in spite of all its benevolence and intelligence, it seems perpetually doomed.

VIII

The objections most likely to make an untoward impression on the reader of *Literature and Dogma* we have now, we believe, noticed, and done our best to remove. On others we will not linger, because they can hardly occasion any real difficulty. The *Westminster* Reviewer complains of our talking of the *secret* of Jesus, because, says the Reviewer, Jesus made no *secret* of it himself. Neither did the Eternal make a secret to Israel of righteousness, and yet Israel talks of the secret of the Eternal. The truth which its holder is supposed alone or in especial to have the clue to and to deal in, men call his *secret*. Again, we are told that we must not suppose an element of genuine curativeness in the exorcising of unclean spirits by Jesus, because the Jewish thaumaturgists are represented exorcising them also. But what? because there are charlatans who play upon the nervous system

for their own purposes, can there be no doctor who plays upon it beneficently? Again, we have said that it can be verified that Jesus is the son of the Eternal that makes for righteousness, and the *Westminster* Reviewer objects that 'to say that any man is the son of a natural law is absurd.' But the Bible never speaks of the Eternal as a natural law, but always as if this power lived, and breathed, and felt. Speaking as the Bible speaks, we say that Jesus is verifiably the Son of God. Speaking as the *Westminster* Reviewer speaks, and calling God a natural law, we say that of this natural law Jesus is verifiably the offspring or outcome. Finally, the *Quarterly* Reviewer will not allow us to pronounce it verifiable that righteousness is only possible by the method of Jesus, because, says he, there was righteousness in the world before the Christian era. Really, the Fourth Gospel answers him, where Jesus says: *Before Abraham was, I am.*[1] But, perhaps, though a *Quarterly* Reviewer, he has been dallying with the Tübingen school, and pronounces the Fourth Gospel a fancy-piece. Let us try him, then, with St. Augustine:—*Res ipsa, quae nunc religio Christiana, nuncupatur erat apud antiquos, nec defuit ab initio generis humani.*

We have just now appealed to the Fourth Gospel. Professor Rauwenhoff lays down that the weakest part of *Literature and Dogma* is its

[1] John viii. 58.

reliance on sayings of Jesus from that Gospel. On his death-bed Baur pleasantly remarked that to his Tübingen school, so often reported vanquished, might with truth be applied the words of St. Paul: *As dying, and behold we live.* Well might Baur say so. He and his school live, above all, in the strong and growing acceptance of their criticism of the Fourth Gospel. Already Liberal reviewers in this country begin to treat it as certain. Discussions of it have hitherto not been frequent in this country, but the vogue for such discussions will certainly increase. What we think of this class of questions, and of its fundamental character, we have said in *Literature and Dogma.* But to return for a little to the subject, to treat it a little more closely, may be well. Probably, too, the reader of *Literature and Dogma* will expect us to make good our free use, in that work, of the Fourth Gospel. The method, the secret, and the sweet reasonableness of Jesus are independent of the Fourth Gospel, but from that Gospel they receive important illustration.

The question concerning the Fourth Gospel raises the whole question concerning the Canon of the New Testament, and, indeed, concerning the Canon of Scripture generally. On this larger question also, then, we cannot but touch; we shall, however, particularly address ourselves to considering the Fourth Gospel, and the criticisms which have been directed against it. To

invalidate it two tests are employed: the test of external evidence, and the test of internal evidence. We will, after saying what seems needful on the general question of the Canon of Scripture, proceed to take first the external evidence in the case of the Fourth Gospel, the questions of dates and of texts. But the internal evidence, the test of literary criticism, is above all relied on as decisive by Baur and his school. So we will, finally, try the Fourth Gospel by that test too. *Caesarem appellasti ad Caesarem ibis.*

CHAPTER IV

THE BIBLE-CANON

We said in *Literature and Dogma*, that all our criticism of the Four Evangelists who report Jesus had this for its governing idea: *to make out what, in their report of Jesus, is Jesus, and what is the reporters.* We then went on to remark as follows:—'Now, this excludes as unessential much of the criticism which is bestowed on the New Testament. What it excludes is those questions as to the exact date, the real authorship, the first publication, the rank of priority of the Gospels, on which so much thought is by many bestowed; questions which have a great attraction for critics, which are in themselves good to be entertained, which lead to much close and fruitful observations of the texts, and in which very high ingenuity may be shown and very great plausibility reached, but not more; they cannot really be settled, the data are insufficient. And for our purpose they are not essential.' And we concluded by saying:—'In short, to know accurately the history

of our documents is impossible; and even if it were possible, we should yet not know accurately what Jesus said and did; for *his reporters were incapable of rendering it, he was so much above them.*'

As to the character of the documents, however, we added this: 'It must be remembered that of none of these recorders have we, probably, the very original record. The record, when we first get it, has passed through at least half a century, or more, of oral tradition, and through more than one written account.'

Nevertheless, we thought that in the Fourth Gospel we found, after all these deductions had been made as to the capacity of the Gospel-reporters and the quality of the Gospel documents, a special clue in one most important respect to the line really taken by Jesus in his teaching. A Gospel-writer, having by nature his head full of the external evidence from miracles, would never, we said, have invented the insistence on internal evidence as what, above all, proves a doctrine. 'Wherever we find what enforces this evidence, or builds upon it, there we may be especially sure that we are on the trace of Jesus; because turn or bias in this direction the disciples were more likely to omit from his discourse than to import into it, they were themselves so wholly preoccupied with the evidence from miracles.' But we find in the Fourth Gospel a remarkable insistence upon the internal evidence for the doctrine

promulgated by Jesus. Here then we certainly come, we said, upon a trace, too little marked by the reporters in general, of the genuine teaching of Jesus; and this gives a peculiar eminency and value to the Fourth Gospel.

All this is contested; some of it by one set of critics, some of it by another. Critics like the *Westminster* Reviewer will not allow that Jesus was over the heads of his reporters. The author of *Supernatural Religion*, far from thinking that the Fourth Gospel puts us in a special way on the trace of Jesus, declares that it 'gives a portrait of Jesus totally unlike that of the Synoptics,' contrasts 'the dogmatic mysticism and artificial discourses of the one' with 'the sublime morality and simple eloquence of the other,' assigns, in short, the entire superiority to the Synoptics. On the other hand, the critics in the opposite camp,—critics of so-called orthodox views,—will by no means allow that in our Four Gospels we have not the very original record; or that they went through the period of incubation and of gradual rise into acceptance which we suppose. From the end of the first century of our era there was, according to these critics, a Canon of the New Testament, and our Four Gospels formed the Gospel-part of it.

But, above all, it is contested, and in the most practical way possible, that inquiries as to the exact date, the real authorship, the first publication, the rank of priority, and so forth,

of our Four Gospels, can with any truth be called, as we have called them, unessential, or that the data are insufficient, as we have said they are, for ever really settling such questions. Whoever reads German will know that there exists a whole library of German theological works addressed to these questions; and that, far from being treated as questions which cannot really be settled, they are in general settled in these works with the greatest vigour and rigour. Gradually these works are getting known here, partly by translation, partly by their influence upon English writers. The author of *Supernatural Religion* has nourished himself upon them, and has thrown himself with signal energy, and with very considerable success, into that course of inquiry which these works pursue. He occupies a volume and a half with this line of inquiry, and he has at any rate succeeded, one can see, in giving unbounded satisfaction to the Liberal world, both learned and unlearned. He huddles up into a page a declaration of adherence to 'an infinitely wise and beneficent Being,' and to 'the true and noble faith which is the child of Reason'; and the claims of religion being thus satisfied, with all the difficult and troublesome questions which they open, he is free to devote his volume and a half to a negative examination of the current notions about the date and authorship of the Bible-documents. And so doing, and doing it with much effectiveness,

he is, we say, in the eyes of the Liberal world, almost the ideal of what 'an able critic' on Biblical matters, 'a profound critic,' ought to be. Liberals say to one another, with an air of thankful conviction: 'Surely, Superstition is at last doomed; it can never survive this blow!' Liberal newspapers, Liberal reviews, Liberal philosophers, and the scientific gentlemen in strong force besides (some of the latter being inclined, however, to substitute the word 'Christianity' for the word 'Superstition'), have with wonderful unanimity been moved to blend their voices, ever since the book called *Supernatural Religion* became known to the public, in this new and strange kind of Hallelujah Chorus.

What, then, is the reader of *Literature and Dogma* to think? That on these points, which we treated as not admitting of complete settlement, one can, on the contrary, attain full and absolute certainty? That the Fourth Gospel, which we treated as affording a special clue to the line of evidence insisted on by Jesus, is, on the contrary, a guide utterly misleading? And, finally, that the investigations which we treated as unessential, are, on the contrary, all-important, and that it behoves him to go eagerly into them?

In determining his answer to these questions, he will do well to keep in mind what is the one object we set before him in the present inquiry: *to enjoy the Bible and to turn it to his benefit.* Whatever else he may propose to

himself in dealing with the Bible, this remains his one proper object. In another order of interest, the poetry of Homer supplies here a useful illustration for us. Elaborate inquiries have been raised as to the date, authorship, and mode of composition of the Homeric poems. Some writers have held, too, and have laboriously sought to prove, that there is a hidden mystical sense running all through them. All this sort of disquisition, or at any rate some department of it, is nearly sure to catch at one time or other the attention of the reader of Homer, and to tempt and excite him. But, after all, the proper object for the reader of the Homeric poems remains this: to enjoy Homer, and to turn him to his benefit. In dealing even with Homer, we say, this is found true, and very needful to be borne in mind;—with an object where yet the main interest is properly intellectual. How much more does it hold true of the Bible! where the main interest is properly not intellectual, but practical.

Therefore our reader has still his chief work with the Bible to do, after he has settled all questions about its mode of composition, if they can be settled. This makes it undesirable for him to spend too much time and labour on these questions, or indeed on any collateral questions whatever. And he will observe, moreover, that as to the rules with which he starts in setting himself to feel and apply the Bible, he is

practically just in the same position when he has read and accepted our half-dozen lines about the composition of the Gospels, as when he has read the volume and a half devoted to it in *Supernatural Religion*. For the result is the same: that the record of the sayings and doings of Jesus, when we first get it, has passed through at least half a century, or more, of oral tradition, and through more than one written account. So, too, a man is practically in the same position when he has read and accepted our half-dozen pages about miracles, as when he has read the half volume in which the author of *Supernatural Religion* professes to establish a complete induction against them. For the result reached is in both cases the same: that miracles do not really happen. And we suppose our reader to be ready enough to admit what we say both of miracles and of the condition in which the Gospel-record reaches us. For our book is addressed to those inclined to reject the Bible-testimony, and to attribute to its documents and assertions not too much authority, but too little.

When, however, our reader has accepted what we say about the untrustworthiness of miracles and the looseness of the Gospel-record, his real work has still to begin. Whereas when the author of *Supernatural Religion* has demonstrated the same thing to him in two volumes, his work is over. Or, at most, he has still to edify himself with the page saying

how 'from Jewish mythology we rise to higher conceptions of an infinitely wise and beneficent Being'; or perhaps, to retire into the 'one unassailable fortress' of the Duke of Somerset. With us at this stage, on the contrary, his work only begins. His work, with us, is to learn to enjoy and turn to his benefit the Bible, as the Word of the Eternal. It would be inexcusable in us, therefore, to give him more preliminary trouble than we can help, by the elaborate establishment of conclusions where he is with us already, or which he is quite disposed to take from us on trust.

No: for the reader whom *Literature and Dogma* has in view, learned discussions of the date, authorship, and mode of composition of this or that Bible-document,—whether complete certainty can be attained in them or whether it cannot,—are, as we called them, unessential. Even the question of the trustworthiness of the Fourth Gospel is not an essential question for him. For the value of the Fourth Gospel, as we think, is that whereas Jesus was far over the heads of all his reporters, he was in some respects better comprehended by the author of this Gospel than by the Synoptics; the line of internal evidence which Jesus followed in pressing his doctrines is better marked. But still the all-important thing to seize in Jesus is his method, and his secret, and the element of mildness and sweet reasonableness

in which they both worked; and these are perfectly well given in the Synoptics. In the Synoptics are the great marking texts for all three. For the method: 'Cleanse the *inside* of the cup; what comes from within, *that* defiles a man.' For the secret: 'He that will save his life shall lose it; he that will lose his life shall save it.' For the sweet reasonableness and mildness: 'Learn of me that I am mild and lowly in heart, and ye shall find rest unto your souls.' So that if we lose the Fourth Gospel, we do not lose these. All we lose is a little lifting up of the veil with which the imperfection of the reporters, and their proneness to demand miracles, to rely on miracles, have overspread the real discourse and doings of Jesus.

II

Nevertheless, according to that buoyant and immortal sentence with which Aristotle begins his *Metaphysics*, *All mankind naturally desire knowledge*. When discussions about the Canon of the New Testament are so rife, the reader of *Literature and Dogma* may well wish to know what he may most reasonably think touching the origin and history of those documents to which he is so often referred by us. More particularly may he wish to know this about that wonderful document

which has exercised such a potent fascination upon Christendom, the Fourth Gospel. Luther called it 'the true head-Gospel': it is hardly too much to say that for Christendom it has been so. The author of *Supernatural Religion* speaks contemptuously of its dogmatic, mysterious, and artificial discourses; but its chief opponents have spoken of it with more respect. Strauss is full of admiration of the Fourth Gospel for the artistic skill of its composition; Baur, for its spiritual beauty. The reader of *Literature and Dogma* cannot but be interested in getting as near as he can to the truth about such a document, the object of criticisms so diverse.

We will take him, then, by the same road which we travelled ourselves, when we sought to ascertain how stood the truth about the New Testament records, so far as it could be known. We shall suppose him to come to this inquiry as we did ourselves;—absolutely disinterested, with no foregone conclusion at the bottom of one's mind to start with, no secondary purpose of any kind to serve; but with the simple desire to see the thing, so far as this may be possible, as it really is. We ourselves had not, indeed, so much at stake in the inquiry as some people. For whenever the Gospels may have been written, and whether we have in them the very words of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, or not,

we did not believe the reporters of Jesus capable, in either case, of rendering Jesus perfectly; he was too far above them.

In England the evidence as to the Canon of the Gospels ought to be well judged, if it be true, as Sir Henry Maine thinks, that the English law of evidence by its extreme strictness has formed English people to be good judges of evidence. Two things, however, must everywhere, if they are found present, impede men in judging questions of evidence well. One is, a strong bias existing, before we try the questions, to answer them in a certain manner. Of Biblical criticism with this bias we have abundance in England. In examining the evidence as to the literary history of the New Testament, this criticism does not, in fact, seek to see the thing as it really is, but it holds a brief for that view which is most convenient to the traditional theology current amongst us. We shall not blame this criticism. The position of the critic, the circumstances under which he writes, are perhaps such as to make his course inevitable. But his work, produced under such conditions, cannot truly serve men's need, cannot endure long; it is marked with death before it is born. Great learning it may have, or great ingenuity, or great eloquence; but the critic is all the time holding a brief, and these advantages are then, in fact, of use only to

serve the side for which his brief is held. To be seriously useful, they should be employed solely to exhibit and recommend the truth of the things investigated, as this truth really is.

The other obstacle to a sound judgment of the evidence respecting the Canon arises when people make too much of a business of such inquiries, give their whole life and thoughts too exclusively to them, and treat them as if they were of paramount importance. One can then hardly resist the temptation of establishing certainties where one has no right to certainty; of introducing into the arrangement of facts a system and symmetry of one's own, for which there are no sufficient data. How many a theory of great vigour and rigour has in Germany, in the Protestant faculties of theology, been due to this cause! A body of specialists is at work there, who take as the business of their lives a class of inquiries like the question about the Canon of the Gospels. They are eternally reading its literature, reading the theories of their colleagues about it; their personal reputation is made by emitting, on the much-canvassed subject, a new theory of their own. The want of variety and of balance in their life and occupations impairs the balance of their judgment in general. Their special subject intoxicates them. They are carried away by theorising; they affirm confidently

where one cannot be sure; and, in short, prove by no means good and safe judges of the evidence before them.

In France and England people do not, certainly, in general err on the side of making too great a business of this particular speciality. In general we too much neglect it, and are in consequence either at the mercy of routine, or at the mercy of the first bold innovator. Of Biblical learning we have not enough. Yet it remains true, and a truth never to be lost sight of, that in the domain of religion, as in the domain of poetry, the whole apparatus of learning is but secondary, and that we always go wrong with our learning when we suffer ourselves to forget this. The reader of *Literature and Dogma* will allow, however, that we did not there intrude any futile exhibition of learning to draw off his attention from the one fixed object of that work,—religion. We did not write for a public of professors; we did not write to interest the learned and curious. We wrote to restore the use and enjoyment of the Bible to plain people, who might be in danger of losing it. We hardly subjoined a reference or put a note; for we wished to give nothing of this kind except what a plain reader, busy with our main argument, would be likely to look for and to use. Our reader will trust us, therefore, if we now take him into this subject of

the criticism of the Canon, not to bury him in it, not to cozen him with theories of vigour and rigour, not to hold a brief for either the Conservative side or the Liberal, not to make certainties where there are none; but to try and put him in the way of forming a plain judgment upon the plain facts of the case, so far as they can be known.

Thus he will see the grounds for what we said in *Literature and Dogma* about the Canon of the Gospels, and about the Fourth Gospel's peculiar character, without having himself to plunge into the voluminous literature of the subject. In our search for a sure standing-ground in the use of the Bible, we have had to go through a great deal of this literature in our time; of how much of it may we not exclaim with Themistocles: *Give me, not to remember, but to forget!* If Goethe could say that all which was really worth knowing in all the sciences he had ever studied would go into one small envelope, how much more may one say this of the harvest to be gathered from the literature now in question! That may be no reason for neglecting it, indeed; light and adjustment often come insensibly to us from labours of which the direct positive result seems small. Nevertheless, in these days of multifarious studies soliciting us let us keep a wholesome dread, and let our reader share it with us, of spending too much of our life

and time over the wrong ones. We have quoted in *Literature and Dogma* the day's prayer given in a short sentence of the *Imitation*: '*Utinam per unum diem bene simus conversati in hoc mundo!* Would that for one single day we may have lived in this world as we ought!' He who adds to that sentence this other from the same book: '*Da mihi, Domine, scire quod sciendum est!* Grant that the knowledge I get may be the knowledge that is worth having!'—and sets the two sentences together before him for his daily guidance, will not have prayed amiss.

But let us come to the Canon. And as the New Testament follows the Old and depends upon it, and since about the Old Testament, too, we had in *Literature and Dogma* a great deal to say, our reader will wish, perhaps, before going into the question of the New Testament, to see brought together first, in the shortest possible summary, what he may reasonably think of the Canon of the Old.

III

The law and the Prophets are often mentioned in the New Testament. But we also find there a three-fold division of the Old Testament Scriptures: *Law, Prophets, Psalms.*[1]

[1] Luke xxiv. 44.—τὰ γεγραμμένα ἐν τῷ νόμῳ Μωυσέως καὶ τοῖς προφήταις καὶ ψαλμοῖς.

And the Greek translator of the lost Hebrew book of the Wisdom of the Son of Sirach, or, as we call it, Ecclesiasticus, who writes in the latter half of the second century before Christ, speaks of *the law, and the prophecies, and the rest of the books*.[1] Here we have the Bible of the Old Testament Scriptures. And, indeed, the writer calling himself Daniel,—whose date is between the translator of the Book of Ecclesiasticus, and this translator's grandfather, who composed it,—in a passage wrongly translated in our version, designates the body of Old Testament Scriptures by a word answering to our very word *Bible*.[2] Can we trace, without coming down below the Christian era to listen to late and untrustworthy Jewish traditions, how this Bible came together?

We can. In the second Book of the Maccabees, dating probably from much the same time as our Greek Ecclesiasticus, the writer, telling the Egyptian Jews of the purification of the Temple at Jerusalem after the Maccabean victories, and of the revival of Jewish religion, says that Nehemiah,—who with Ezra had accomplished the famous restoration of Jewish religion three centuries before,—that Nehemiah, as was related in his writings and commentaries, *founding a library, brought together in addition the*

[1] ὁ νόμος, καὶ αἱ προφητεῖαι, καὶ τὰ λοιπὰ τῶν βιβλίων.—Prologue to Ecclesiasticus, in the Septuagint.

[2] Daniel ix. 2.

things concerning the kings and the prophets, and David's things, and letters of kings about offerings.[1] Offerings to the Temple are here meant, such as those of King Seleucus which the Maccabean historian mentions in his next chapter.[2] At the rebuilding of the Temple, gifts of this kind from friendly foreign kings had a peculiar importance. The letters concerning them could not, however, merit a permanent place in the Bible, and they dropped out of it. But the other writings which Nehemiah is said to have 'brought together in addition' to the stock of already recognised Scriptures, that is, to the Law, answer to that second instalment of Scriptures, which did really, from Nehemiah's time onwards, obtain authority at Jerusalem. They comprise the Books of Judges, Samuel, and Kings, for the 'things concerning the kings'; the Books of Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and the twelve Minor Prophets, for the 'prophets'; and the collection of the Psalms,—called in general after the famous name of the royal Psalmist David,—for 'David's things.'

But the Maccabean historian then proceeds:—'In like manner also Judas (Maccabeus) brought together in addition all the things that were lost by reason of the war we had, and they remain

[1] καταβαλλόμενος βιβλιοθήκην, ἐπισυνήγαγε τὰ περὶ τῶν βασιλέων καὶ προφητῶν, καὶ τὰ τοῦ Δαυίδ, καὶ ἐπιστολὰς βασιλέων περὶ ἀναθημάτων.—2 Maccabees ii. 13.

[2] 2 Maccabees iii. 3.

with us.'[1] Now, this further addition to the stock of recognised Scriptures corresponds to the third instalment of Scriptures,—some of them of then recent date, like the Book of Daniel, others much older, like the Book of Job,—which was received and authorised at Jerusalem. It comprehended exactly the same books, and no more, that our Bibles add to the books said to have been 'brought together' by Nehemiah, and to the Pentateuch and the Book of Joshua. But the order of the later books in the Hebrew Bible was by no means the same as it is in ours, and to this we shall return presently.

The Law itself, the Thora, the first of the three great divisions of the Hebrew Bible, whom shall we call as evidence for it? The founder of the second division, Nehemiah himself. He has told us how at Jerusalem, after the restoration, 'the people gathered themselves together as one man into the street that was before the water-gate, and they spake unto Ezra the scribe to bring the book of the law of Moses; and Ezra the priest brought the law, and he read therein from the morning until mid-day, before the men and the women and those that could understand; also day by day, from the first day unto the last day, he read in the book of the law of God.'[2] This book was Israel's history

[1] 2 Maccabees ii. 14.—ὡσαύτως δὲ καὶ Ἰούδας τὰ διαπεπτωκότα διὰ τὸν πόλεμον τὸν γεγονότα ἡμῖν ἐπισυνήγαγε πάντα, καὶ ἔστιν παρ' ἡμῖν. [2] Nehemiah viii. 1, 2, 3, 18.

from its first beginning down to the conquest of the Promised Land, as this history stands written in the Pentateuch and the Book of Joshua. To that collection many an old book had given up its treasures and then itself vanished for ever. Many voices were blended there; unknown voices, speaking out of the early dawn. In the strain there were many passages familiar as household words, yet the whole strain, in its continuity and connection, was to the mass of the people at that time new and affecting. 'All the people wept when they heard the words of the law.'[1] And the Levites, in stilling them, gave in one short sentence the secret of Israel's religion and of the religion of the Bible: 'Mourn not, nor weep,' they said; '*the joy of the Eternal is your strength.*'[2]

Now, this revival of religion in Jerusalem, under Ezra and Nehemiah, had had its counterpart in a former revival, two centuries earlier, under King Josiah. In Josiah's discovery of the book of the law, and his solemn publication of it to the people, we have the original consecration of a written historic record embodying the law; we have the nucleus of our existing Bible. In repairing the Temple, 'Hilkiah the priest found a book of the law of the Lord by the hand of Moses. Then Hilkiah delivered the book to Shaphan; Shaphan the scribe told the king, saying: Hilkiah the priest hath given me

[1] Nehemiah viii. 9. [2] Nehemiah viii. 9, 10.

a book. And Shaphan read it before the king. And it came to pass, when the king had heard the words of the law, that he rent his clothes. And the king went up into the house of the Lord, and all the men of Judah, and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and the priests and the Levites, and all the people great and small, and he read in their ears all the words of the book of the covenant that was found in the house of the Lord. And he caused all that were present in Jerusalem and Benjamin to stand to it.'[1] Here we have, in all probability, Deuteronomy; as an edifying summary, from the point of view of the time then present,[2] of the chosen people's early history and of its covenant with God. Around Deuteronomy the rest of the Pentateuch and the story of Joshua's conquest gathered. Many old books of the Hebrew nation contributed, as we have said, their contents to them. Of some of the books we have still the names; but when once their substance had been secured for ever in the Thora, their function was at an end, and they perished. Among the devout Jews of the Captivity, severed from the Holy Land and the Temple services, this first instalment

[1] 2 Chronicles xxxiv. 14, 15, 18, 19, 30, 32. See also 2 Kings xxii., xxiii.

[2] Chapters xxxi. and xxxii. of Deuteronomy, if we read them with attention, tell us the book's date. They belong to the revival under Josiah in the seventh century, nearly a hundred years after the ruin and captivity of the house of Israel, and with 'the line of Samaria and the plummet of the house of Ahab' threatening also Jerusalem and the house of Judah.

of the Bible, this 'volume of the book' of which a Psalmist of the exile speaks,[1] became firmly established. It came back with them at the return, a consecrated authority; and from this book it was that Ezra read to the people.

Do we inquire for the original nucleus of the Thora itself, for the Law as in its earliest written form it existed, in the primitive times when writing was scarce and difficult, and documents were short, and readers were few? This also we can find. It was the 'Book of the Law,' consisting probably of the Decalogue, and of some other portions besides the Decalogue of what we now find in Exodus, 'put in the side of the ark of the covenant of the Lord.'[2] The 'testimony' thus laid up before the Lord and guarded by the priests and Levites, was given to the kings at their accession and solemnly accepted by them.[3]

The arrangement of the Hebrew Bible corresponds with this its history and confirms it. Only we must add, that from each of the two earlier collections the last book was taken, and was employed to serve as an introducer to the collection which followed. Thus the Pentateuch, or five books of Moses, stood alone as the 'Thora.' This first great instalment of the Bible Samaria, as is well known, received from Jerusalem, but would receive nothing more. The Book of Joshua stood at the head of the

[1] Psalm xl. 7. [2] Deuteronomy xxxi. 26.
[3] 2 Kings xi. 12; Deut. xvii. 18.

second instalment of the Bible,—the eight books of Prophets, 'Nebiim,' as they were called. For, indeed, prophecy and the prophet were the force and glory of Israel's religion; and the Books of Joshua, Judges, Samuel, and Kings, which we call historical, were at Jerusalem prized chiefly as the records of many a word and deed of prophets anterior to the age of literary prophetic compositions, and went by the name of *Earlier Prophets*. Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and the Book of the Minor Prophets, were called the four *Later Prophets*.

The third division of the Bible had the name of 'Ketubim,' translated by Jerome *Hagiographa*, but simply meaning *Writings*, *Scriptures*. These are the 'remaining writings' mentioned by the translator of Ecclesiasticus. They were nine in number, and the twenty-two books of the now completed Canon thus answered to the twenty-two letters of the Hebrew alphabet. At their head was placed the last book of the second formation of authorised Scriptures,—'the things of David,' the Psalms. This admirable book with its double merits,—merit prophetic and religious, and merit poetic and literary,—might well serve to usher in and commend a series of mixed character. Early works of the highest poetical value, not hitherto included in the Canon, such as the Book of Job, this series adopted and saved; early works, also, of the highest ethical value, such as the Book of

Proverbs. It adopted contemporary works, like the Book of Daniel;—works which reflected and powerfully engaged, as we can see by the prominence of the Book of Daniel at the Christian era, the feelings of the time. It adopted works, like the Book of Ezra, which glorified Jerusalem, and deeply interested the Temple-hierarchy whose sanction made the books canonical. But in gravity and indispensableness for the proper religion of the Old Testament, this late instalment of 'the remaining writings,' cannot certainly, after we leave the Psalms, in general quite rank with the two earlier instalments of Law and Prophets. Simply to recite the last names in the Hebrew Canon is to mark sufficiently this somewhat inferior character of the final gleanings. The last books in the Hebrew Bible are not, as in ours, the Minor Prophets; they are Esther, Daniel, Ezra, Nehemiah, and Chronicles.

During the two centuries between Judas Maccabeus and the fall of Jerusalem, materials for a fourth instalment of Scriptures accumulated. In the deep spiritual agitation of those times, religious books which met the needs of the moment, and which spoke a modern language easy to be read and to be understood, were greatly in request. Particularly was this the case among the Greek Jews, and at a distance from Jerusalem. The hierarchy at Jerusalem had its authorised list; but at Alexandria

or in the provinces additional Scriptures were freely read and became popular. The additions to Daniel and Esther, the Book of Baruch, the Book of Tobit, Wisdom, Ecclesiasticus,—almost all the books which we find in our Apocrypha, —were Scriptures of this class. Into the Greek Bible, the Bible for the great world and in the then universal language, they made good their entrance. Other new Scriptures, which did not make their way into the Greek Bible, we find elsewhere. The Æthiopian Bible preserved the Book of Enoch. Some of these books were earlier than books admitted to the Hebrew Canon. Some, like the Book of Wisdom, were very late, and existed in Greek only. But they answered to the wants of their time, and spoke its language. *Resurrection*, the great word of the New Testament, never appears in the canonical books of the Old; it appears in the Apocrypha. Many of these works were edifying and excellent. We can trace in the New Testament their popularity and their strong influence; indeed, the Book of Enoch is quoted in the New Testament as a genuine Scripture.[1] At the Christian era, then, these books were knocking, we may say, for admission into the Hebrew Canon. And, undoubtedly, if Christianity had not come when it did, and if the Jewish state had endured, the best of them would have been (and with good reason)

[1] Epistle of Jude, verse 14.

admitted. But there came the end of the Jewish state, the destruction of Jerusalem; and the door was shut.

For the stronghold on Mount Moriah was now gone: the Bible of the ancient people remained the one stronghold of its religion. It is well known with what rigidity Rabbinism established itself in this stronghold. At first it even bethought itself of sacrificing what might seem weak points, like the Book of Ecclesiastes and the Song of Solomon. They were retained, however, and the worship of the letter of Scripture, which then set in with full force, was extended to them also. But it extended not to Scriptures outside the Hebrew Canon, as this Canon had been for the last time formally approved in the days of Judas Maccabeus. The enlarged Greek Bible was the Bible of Christians, and Greek was the language of Christianity. Rabbinism now deplored the day when the Bible had been translated into Greek. It re-translated it into Greek in an anti-Christian sense; it sternly rejected the Greek additions; it mocked at the ignorant Christians who received them. But the Greek Bible, with all its books, had become dear to Christians, and were by the Christian Church preserved. Learned men, like Origen and St. Jerome, knew well the difference between the books of the Apocrypha and the books of the Hebrew Canon. But this difference was by the mass of Christians

unregarded or unknown, and the Latin Bible inevitably reproduced the books of the Greek. The African Synods, at the end of the fourth century, mark the time when the distinction between the Apocrypha and the Hebrew Canon had become so generally obliterated in the West, that the books of both were stamped by the Church as having one and the same canonical authority.

At the Reformation, Protestantism reverted to the Hebrew Canon. But the influence of the Latin Vulgate, and of the Greek Bible, still shows itself in the order of the books. The Greek, and the Vulgate following it, had adopted, in place of the old and significant tripartite division into Law, Prophets, and Writings, a division into prose books and poetical books, the prophets being counted with the latter ; and in arranging the books of each class, the order of date was followed.[1] This innovation our Bibles retain ; and therefore our Old Testament ends with the last of the poetical books, Malachi, instead of ending with the last of the *Ketubim*, Chronicles.

IV

Thus we have summarised, for the benefit of the reader of *Literature and Dogma*, the history

[1] The *Maccabees* only, though a prose book of history, is in the Vulgate printed by itself at the end of the poetical books.

of the Canon of that Old Testament to which we are so often sending him. The points in the history of the Canon of the New Testament require to be treated with more of detail, for our positions have here to be made good against objectors.

We know how the Scriptures of the Old Testament are appealed to in the New. They are appealed to as an authority established and recognised, just as the Bible is now appealed to by us. But when did the New Testament, in that form in which we possess it, come to be recognised as *Scripture* like the Old Testament? Clearly the documents composing it appeared at different times, and were not first published to the world as one authorised whole called the New Testament. Clearly there was a time when they had not acquired the authority they possessed afterwards; when people preferred, for instance, to any written narrative, the oral relations of eye-witnesses. One of the earliest and most important witnesses to the written narratives, Papias, is a distinct witness, at the same time, to this preference for oral relations. 'I did not consider,' he says, speaking in the first half of the second century after Christ, about the year 140,—'I did not consider things from books to be of so much good to me, as things from the living and abiding voice.'[1]

[1] See Papias in Eusebii *Historia Ecclesiastica*, iii. 39.—οὐ γὰρ τὰ ἐκ τῶν βιβλίων τοσοῦτόν με ὠφελεῖν ὑπελάμβανον, ὅσον τὰ παρὰ

And he goes on to mention his communications with those who had actually heard 'the disciples of the Lord.' For Papias, then, there was not yet a body of Scriptures fully answering to our New Testament, and having like authority with the Old; if there had been, he would hardly have spoken in this fashion. And no man can point to any exact moment and manner in which our body of New Testament Scriptures received its authority. But we can point to a moment after which we find our present New Testament Canon in possession of undisputed authority in the Church of the West, and before which we do not.

We have mentioned the African Synods. The two Synods of Carthage,—the first of them held in the year 397 of our era, the second in the year 419,—deliver the Canon of the New Testament as we have it now.[1] All its books, and no others, are *canonical;* that is, they furnish the rule of faith, they form a class by themselves, they are authorised for public use. And so, as every one knows, they have continued. For the Eastern Church, a similar authoritative enunciation of our Canon of the New Testament is first

ζώσης φωνῆς καὶ μενούσης. The latter words are commonly taken to mean merely the voice of living speakers, but they almost certainly contain a reminiscence of 1 Peter i. 23, and of Isaiah xl. 8, and mean speakers who had heard the voice of Jesus.

[1] The earlier Synod mentions the Epistle to the Hebrews apart, though as Paul's; the second Synod drops this distinction, and speaks of Paul's 'Fourteen Epistles.' The New Testament Canon of the two Synods is in other respects the same.

found in the Festal Letter of St. Athanasius, of which the date is probably A.D. 365. But an absence of fixed consent as to certain books goes on showing itself amongst Greek Christians for long afterwards. Our present business, however, is with our own Western Christianity.

St. Jerome died in 420, the year after the second Synod of Carthage. His Biblical labours and learning are celebrated; he knew more about the Bible than any of his contemporaries. Cavillers he had, as have all men who bring new criticism to disturb old habits; but his orthodoxy was undoubted. His Biblical publications were undertaken at a Pope's request; and the first instalment of them, a corrected Latin version of the Four Gospels, appeared in the year 383 with a prefatory letter addressed to the Pope himself. This great churchman has left us his remarks on several of the works which the African Synods were presently to include in the Canon of the New Testament, and which have stood there ever since, possessing in the eyes of Christendom a like sacredness and authority with the rest of the Canon. In reading him, we are to bear in mind the character of the speaker. It is as if Dr. Pusey, with the reputation for learning and orthodoxy which we know him to have, and commissioned, besides, by the heads of the Anglican Church to revise the Bible, was speaking of the Canon. St. Jerome, then, says of the Epistle to the

Hebrews :—'The custom of the Latin Christians does not receive it among the Canonical Scriptures.'[1] Of the Apocalypse he says :—'The Greek Churches use the same freedom in regard to John's Apocalypse.'[2] Of the so-called Second Epistle of Peter he says :—'It is denied by most to be his.'[3] Of the Epistle of James he says :—'It is asserted to have been brought out by somebody else under his name.'[4] Of the Epistle of Jude he says :—'Inasmuch as the author appeals to the Book of Enoch, which is apocryphal, the Epistle is rejected by most.'[5] Of the three Epistles attributed to St. John, Jerome says :—'He wrote one Epistle which is acknowledged by all churches and scholars, but the remaining two are asserted to be by John the Elder.'[6]

Now, all Jerome's sympathies were with what was orthodox, ecclesiastical, regular. The works on which he has here been remarking seemed to him good and edifying ; they had been much used, and had inspired attachment. The tendency in the Church was to admit them to canonicity, as the African Synods presently did. Jerome wished them to be admitted. He helped forward

[1] 'Latinorum consuetudo non recipit inter scripturas canonicas.'

[2] 'Nec Graecorum quidem ecclesiae Apocalypsin Joannis eadem libertate suscipiunt.'

[3] 'Secunda a plerisque ejus esse negatur.'

[4] 'Ab alio quodam sub nomine ejus edita asseritur.'

[5] 'Quia de libro Enoch, qui apocryphus est, in ea assumit testimonium, a plerisque rejicitur.'

[6] 'Reliquae autem duae Joannis presbyteri asseruntur.'

their admission by arguments in its favour, some of them not a little strained. But what we want the reader to observe is the entire upset which Jerome gives to our popular notion of the Canon of the New Testament; to the notion of a number of sacred books, just so many and no more, all alike of the most indisputable authenticity, and having equal authority from the very first. It is true, they were about to get invested with this character, but through the authority of the Church, and because,—while this authority was on the increase,—learning and criticism, amidst the invasions and miseries of the general break-up which was then befalling Europe, languished and died nearly out. Already the African Synods, which may be said to have first laid down authoritatively for our Western Europe the Canon of the New Testament, imagined that Wisdom and Ecclesiasticus were by Solomon, although Wisdom was composed in Greek hardly half a century before the Christian era. St. Augustine, who died ten years after St. Jerome, was far too accomplished a man not to know, although his studies had not lain in this special direction, how, in general, the Canon of the New Testament had arisen, and how great was the difference between the evidence for some books and for others. But the authority of the Church was enough for him. In a sentence, which for Paul would have been inconceivable, he shows us how the idea of this authority had

by his time grown :—'*I receive the Gospel itself*,' he says, '*only upon the authority of the Catholic Church*.'[1] The Reformation arrived, and to Protestants the authority of the Church ceased to appear all-sufficient for establishing the canonicity of books of Scripture. Then grew up the notion that our actual New Testament intrinsically possessed this character of a Canon, the notion of its having from the first been one sure and sacred whole as it stands, a whole with all its parts equipollent; a kind of talisman, as we have elsewhere said, that had been handed to us straight out of heaven.

Therefore the other day, when there was published for the use of the young a Bible in which some parts of the Scriptures were taken and others left out, the Dean of Carlisle wrote an indignant letter in blame of this audacious attempt, as he thought it, to make distinctions in what was all alike the Word of God. To very many his blame will have seemed perfectly just. Nay, all that mechanical employment of Scripture texts which is so common in the religious world, and so unhesitating, is due to just such a notion of Scripture as the venerable Dean's. Yet how evidently is the notion false! Four hundred years after Christ we have the last representative of Biblical learning before the setting-in of

[1] 'Ego evangelio non crederem, nisi me catholicae ecclesiae auctoritas commoveret.'

mediæval ignorance,—we have the Dr. Pusey of his time, a great churchman, orthodox, learned, trusted,—declaring, without the least concealment, the essential difference in authority between some documents in our New Testament and others! For manifestly the difference in authority is great between a document like the so-called Second Epistle of Peter, *rejected by most*, and a document like the Epistle to the Romans, which every churchman accepted.

And the more we ascend to the times before St. Jerome,—to the primitive times, as they are called,—the more does this difference between the documents now composing the Canon become visible. Churchmen like Eusebius and Origen testify as clearly as Jerome to the non-acceptance, in their time, of books now in the Canon, and do not, as Jerome, plead for their acceptance. So that really, when one comes to look into the thing, the common notion about the Canon is so plainly false, that to take it for granted, as the Dean of Carlisle does, and to found indignant denunciations upon it, will one day be resented as an outrage upon common sense and notorious facts. It is like the Bishop of Lincoln's allegation that 'episcopacy was an institution of God Himself'; an allegation which might make one suppose that in Genesis, directly after God had said *Let there be light* (or, perhaps, even before it), he had pronounced,

Let there be bishops. There are plenty of true reasons for the existence of bishops without invoking false ones; and the time will come when thus to invoke the false ones solemnly and authoritatively will shock public opinion.

As to the Canon of the New Testament, then, we see that consent determined it; that after the beginning of the fifth century this consent may be regarded as established in favour of the books of our actual Canon; that before the fifth century it was not yet fully established, and the most eminent doctors in the Church did not hesitate to say so. Consent depended on the known or presumed authenticity of books as proceeding from apostles or apostolic men, from the Apostles of Christ themselves or from their personal followers. Some books of our Canon had not this consent, even in Jerome's time: and of its not being certain in primitive times that these books are what they are now commonly said to be, we have thus the clearest evidence. If the Christian Church of the fourth century had believed it to be absolutely certain that the Johannine Apocalypse was by the Apostle John, or the second Petrine Epistle by the Apostle Peter, no churchman would have rejected them. Some books, then, in our New Testament Canon there plainly are of which the authenticity is doubtful.

We have given cases in which the want

of consent is grave. It is grave when we find it in churchmen; it has its weight even when it is found in heretics. Marcion rejected St. Paul's Epistles to Timothy and Titus, while he admitted the others. It is something against the genuineness of the Pastoral Epistles that a fervent admirer of St. Paul, in the first half of the second century, should not have received them. It is possible that Marcion may have rejected these epistles because they did not suit him. It is possible; but we know that he and his party complained of the adulteration of the rule of Christianity, and professed to revert to what was genuine; it may be, therefore, that Marcion rejected the Pastoral Epistles because they really were not genuine. Or he may have not used the Pastoral Epistles because they were in his time not yet written. It is a case in which the internal evidence for or against the authenticity of the documents in question becomes of peculiar importance. The Alogi, again, heretics of the second century, rejected the Fourth Gospel. The authenticity of this Gospel, therefore, cannot be said to have such a security in general consent as the authenticity of the First Gospel, which not even heretics challenged.

Now to be indignant with those who, under such circumstances, will not take for granted the authenticity of books in the New

Testament Canon, is really unreasonable. We have for the books in the Canon, it is sometimes said, as good evidence as we have for the history of Thucydides; why not require the history of Thucydides to prove its authenticity? This will not bear a moment's examination. The history of Thucydides tells us itself, in the most explicit way possible, the name of its author, and what he was, and what he designed in writing his work. Its authenticity no one has challenged. To forge it under the name of Thucydides no one had any interest. But not one of our Four Gospels says anywhere who its author was. Heretics challenged the authenticity of the Fourth Gospel, and we have seen how documents now in the Canon, which purport to be by this or that Apostle, were gravely suspected in the Church itself. St. Paul himself, in the Second Epistle to the Thessalonians, warns his converts not to let themselves be 'troubled *by letter as from us*,' thus indicating that forgery of this kind was practised as to epistles. As to gospels and acts it was practised too. Tertullian mentions a detected case of it,—forged Acts of Paul, authorising a woman to baptize. The practice of forgery and interpolation was notorious, and the temptation to it was great. One explicit witness is as good as twenty, and we will again take for our witness a great churchman, the ecclesiastical historian Eusebius,

Bishop of Cæsarea, who died in the year 340. He says that scriptures were current 'put forth by the heretics in the name of the Apostles, whether as containing the Gospels of Peter and Thomas and Matthias, or those also of any others besides these, or as containing the Acts of Andrew and John and the other Apostles.'[1]

The Gospels give us the sayings and doings of Jesus himself, and are therefore of the highest importance. How far back can we certainly carry the chain of established consent in favour of our four canonical Gospels? Let us begin with St. Jerome, whom we have already quoted, and from him let us go backwards. For St. Jerome our canonical four are already established:—'Four Gospels whereof the order is this: Matthew, Mark, Luke, John.'[2] That was at the end of the fourth century. In the earlier part of the same century, for Eusebius likewise, whom we have just now cited to show the existence of spurious gospels, the canonicity of our four was established. Let us follow back the chain of great churchmen to the third century and to

[1] Eusebius, *Hist. Eccles.* iii. 25.—*γραφὰς . . . ὀνόματι τῶν ἀποστόλων πρὸς τῶν αἱρετικῶν προφερομένας, ἤτοι ὡς Πέτρου καὶ Θωμᾶ καὶ Ματθία ἢ καί τινων παρὰ τούτους ἄλλων εὐαγγέλια περιεχούσας, ἢ ὡς Ἀνδρέου Ἰωάννου καὶ τῶν ἄλλων ἀποστόλων πράξεις.*

[2] *Præfat. ad Damasum.*—'Quatuor Evangelia quorum ordo est iste: Matthaeus, Marcus, Lucas, Johannes.'

Origen. He died A.D. 254. For him, too, our four canonical Gospels are 'alone undisputed in the Church of God upon earth.'[1] Let us ascend to the second century. Irenæus wrote in the last quarter of it, and no testimony to the Four Gospels of our Canon can be more explicit than his. 'Matthew it was who, among the Hebrews, brought out in their own language a written Gospel, when Peter and Paul were preaching in Rome, and founding the Church. Then, after their departure, Mark, the disciple and interpreter of Peter, he too delivered to us in writing what Peter preached; and Luke, moreover, the follower of Paul, set down in a book the Gospel preached by Paul. Then John, the disciple of the Lord, who also lay on his breast, John too published his Gospel, living at that time at Ephesus, in Asia.'[2] And for Irenæus this number of four, which the Gospels exhibit, has something fixed, necessary, and sacred,

[1] Quoted by Eusebius, *Hist. Eccles.* vi. 25.—*τῶν τεσσάρων εὐαγγελίων, ἃ καὶ μόνα ἀναντίρρητά ἐστιν ἐν τῇ ὑπὸ τὸν οὐρανὸν ἐκκλησίᾳ τοῦ θεοῦ.*

[2] Quoted by Eusebius, *Hist. Eccles.* v. 8.—*ὁ μὲν δὴ Ματθαῖος ἐν τοῖς Ἑβραίοις τῇ ἰδίᾳ αὐτῶν διαλέκτῳ καὶ γραφὴν ἐξήνεγκεν εὐαγγελίου, τοῦ Πέτρου καὶ τοῦ Παύλου ἐν Ῥώμῃ εὐαγγελιζομένων καὶ θεμελιούντων τὴν ἐκκλησίαν. μετὰ δὲ τὴν τούτων ἔξοδον, Μάρκος ὁ μαθητὴς καὶ ἑρμηνευτὴς Πέτρου, καὶ αὐτὸς τὰ ὑπὸ Πέτρου κηρυσσόμενα ἐγγράφως ἡμῖν παραδέδωκε, καὶ Λουκᾶς δέ, ὁ ἀκόλουθος Παύλου, τὸ ὑπ' ἐκείνου κηρυσσόμενον εὐαγγέλιον ἐν βίβλῳ κατέθετο. ἔπειτα Ἰωάννης ὁ μαθητὴς τοῦ κυρίου, ὁ καὶ ἐπὶ τὸ στῆθος αὐτοῦ ἀναπεσών, καὶ αὐτὸς ἐξέδωκε τὸ εὐαγγέλιον, ἐν Ἐφέσῳ τῆς Ἀσίας διατρίβων.*

'like the four zones of our world, and the four winds.'

Here then, about the year 180 of our era, we have from a great churchman the most express testimony to the Four Gospels of our Canon. Higher than this we cannot find a great churchman who gives it us. Ignatius does not give it, nor Polycarp, nor Justin Martyr. But a famous fragment, discovered by Muratori, the Italian antiquary, in the monastery of Bobbio in North Italy, and published by him in the year 1740, carries us, perhaps, to an age a little higher than that of Irenæus. The manuscript containing this fragment is said to be of the eighth century, and is in barbarous Latin. The monastery at Bobbio was founded by St. Columban, and it has been alleged that the barbarisms in our fragment are due to the Irish monks who copied it from the original. Others have assigned to these barbarisms an African source; others, again, have supposed that the fragment is a translation of a Greek original, Greek having been the language of the Roman Church at the time when the author of the fragment lived. However this may be, the important matter is that the fragment,—called, from its finder and first publisher, the *Fragment of Muratori*, the *Canon of Muratori*,—gives us with tolerable nearness its own date. It says that the *Pastor* of Hermas, a work received as Scripture by many in the early Church, was

written, '*quite lately, in our own times*, while Pius, the brother of Hermas, was filling the episcopal chair in Rome.' Pius died in the year 157 of our era. If we believe what the author of the fragment here tells us, we have only to ask ourselves, therefore, what 'quite lately, in our own times' means. And the words can hardly, one must allow, mean a time more than thirty years back from the time of the person uttering them. This would give us the year 187 as the latest date possible for the original of the fragment in question; and as there is no reason why we should put it at the latest date possible, it seems fair to assign it to a time some ten or twelve years, perhaps, before A.D. 187; that is, to a date rather earlier than the date of the testimony of Irenæus.

But the author of *Supernatural Religion* will not allow the Canon of Muratori to be authentic, any more than he will allow to be authentic two fragments of Claudius Apollinaris, Bishop of Hierapolis, quoted in the Paschal Chronicle, which show that Apollinaris, about the year 170 of our era, knew and received the Fourth Gospel. The author of *Supernatural Religion* has a theory that the Fourth Gospel, and, indeed, all the canonical Gospels, were not recognised till a particular time. This theory the Canon of Muratori and the fragments of Apollinaris do not suit; so he rejects them. There is really no more serious reason to be given for his

rejection of them. True, Eusebius gives a list of some works of Apollinaris; and the work on the Paschal controversy, from which the two fragments are taken, is not among them. But Eusebius expressly says that there were other works of Apollinaris of which he did not know the titles. True, Greek was the language of the Roman Church in the second century; but must we think a document forged sooner than admit that a single Roman Christian may have chanced to write in Latin, or that a document written in Greek may have got translated? No; the one real reason which the author of *Supernatural Religion* has for rejecting these three pieces of evidence is, that they do not suit his theory. And this leads us to say a word as to the difference between the practice which we impose on ourselves in dealing with evidence, and the practice followed by critics with a theory.

For we suppose the reader of *Literature and Dogma*, for a while suspicious of the Bible, but now convinced that (to use Butler's famous phrase with a slight alteration) *there is something in it*, nay, that there is a great deal in it,—we suppose him to find that there is a hot controversy about the age and authenticity of many of the chief documents of the New Testament, and to wish to know what to think about them. Soon he will perceive that the controversy is in general conducted by people who, in the first place, think that for every question which can

be started the answer can be discovered, and who, in the second place, have a theory which all things must be made to suit. Evidence is dealt with in a fashion that no one would ever dream of who had not a theory to warp him. In the so-called Epistle of Barnabas, a work of the end of the first century, the words *many called, but few chosen*, are quoted with the formula *as it is written*,[1] implying that they are taken from Scripture. The Greek words are the very same that we find in St. Matthew, and no one without a theory to warp him would doubt that the writer of the epistle quotes, not, indeed, necessarily from our Gospel of St. Matthew, but from a collection of sayings of Jesus. Dr. Volkmar, however, maintains that what is here quoted as Scripture must be a passage of the Apocrypha: *There be many created, but few shall be saved.*[2] Strauss applauds him, and says that 'beyond all doubt' this is so. And why? Because, to cite a third well-known critic, Dr. Zeller, 'if in a work of earlier date than the middle of the second century we find a passage quoted as *Scripture*, we may be sure that either the quotation is not from the New Testament, or else the work is not genuine; because *Scripture* is not used for the New Testament till long after the middle of the second century.' That is to say, because the New Testament is not *generally* called Scripture till after the

[1] ὡς γέγραπται. [2] 2 Esdras viii. 3.

middle of the second century, that it should *occasionally* have been called so before is impossible. But the New Testament did not begin in one day to be called Scripture by an Order in Council. There must have been a time when to have it called so was comparatively rare; a time, earlier still, when it was exceedingly rare. But at no time, after the written sayings of Jesus were first published, can it have been *impossible* for a Christian to call them Scripture.

The innovating critics are certainly the most conspicuous offenders in this way, but the conservative critics are not to be trusted either. Neander rejects, like the author of *Supernatural Religion*, a fragment of Apollinaris, and rejects it for the very same reason: that it fails (though from a different cause) to suit him. Bunsen (unaware that by the Epistle to the Alexandrians, named in the Canon of Muratori and stigmatised as apocryphal, the Epistle to the Hebrews is probably meant) lays it down that 'it is quite impossible this Epistle could have been omitted,' and supposes that 'there is, in the middle of this barbarous translation or extract of the Greek original, a chasm, or omission, respecting the Epistle to the Hebrews.' What may we not put in or leave out when we take licence to proceed in this fashion?

Sick of special pleading both on one side and on the other, the reader of *Literature and Dogma*, after a brief experience of the impugners

of the Canon and of its defenders, will probably feel that what he earnestly desires, and what no one will indulge him in, is simply to be permitted to have the fair facts of the case, and to let them speak for themselves. Here it is that we sympathise with him and wish to aid him, because we had just the same earnest desire ourselves after a like experience. And we treat the evidence about the Canon with a mind resolutely free and straightforward, determined to reject nothing because it does not suit us, and to proceed as we should proceed in a literary inquiry where we were wholly disinterested. In the first place, we confess to ourselves that a great many questions may be asked about the New Testament Canon to which it is impossible to give an answer. In the second place, we own that it is *something* in favour of a fact that it has been asserted, and that tradition delivers it. Men do not, we acknowledge, in general use language for the purpose of falsehood, but to communicate a matter faithfully. Of course, many things may be said which we yet must decline to receive, but we require substantial reasons for declining, and not fantastic ones. The second Petrine Epistle calls itself St. Peter's. But we find the strongest internal evidence against its being his; we know that epistles were forged, and we find that its being his was in the early Church strongly disputed. On the other hand, a writer at the end of the first

century quotes words of Jesus as Scripture, and a writer towards the year 175 gives a list of works then received in the Catholic Church as apostolical. We see no strong natural improbability in their having done so; there is no external evidence against it, no suspicious circumstance. And the criticism which, because it finds what they say inconvenient, pronounces their words spurious, interpolated, or with a drift quite other than their plain apparent drift, we call fantastic.

So we receive the witness of the Fragment of Muratori to the canonicity, about the year 175, of our four canonical Gospels, and of those Gospels only.[1] We receive the witness of Claudius Apollinaris, a year or two earlier, to the same effect. He denies that St. Matthew assigns the Last Supper and the Crucifixion to the days which the Judaising Christians supposed, and to which St. Matthew, it seems certain, does assign them; but to make him do so, says Apollinaris, is to make 'the Gospels be at variance.' Whatever we may think of his criticism, let us own that most probably the Bishop of Hierapolis has here in his eye the three Synoptics and St. John.

But he is really our last witness. Ascending

[1] The Fragment begins with a broken sentence relating to the Second Gospel, and continues: *Tertio, evangelii librum secundum Lucam.* It gives St. John's Gospel as the fourth, and there can be no room for doubt that it named Mark and Matthew before coming to Luke.

to the times before him, we find mention of *the gospel*, of *gospels*, of *memorabilia*[1] and *written accounts*[2] of Jesus by his Apostles and their followers. We find incidents given from the life of Jesus, sayings of Jesus quoted. But we look in vain in Justin Martyr, or Polycarp, or Ignatius, or Clement of Rome, either for an express recognition of the four canonical Gospels, such as we have given from Churchmen who lived later, or for a distinct mention of any one of them. No doubt, the mention of an Evangelist's name is unimportant, if his narrative is evidently quoted, and if we recognise, without hesitation, his form of expression. Eusebius quotes words about John baptizing in Ænon, near to Salim, and continues his quotation: 'For John was not yet cast into prison.' Whether Eusebius expressly mentioned the Fourth Gospel or not, we might be sure that here he was quoting from it. But the case is different with 'sayings of the Lord.' These may be quoted either from oral tradition or from some written source other than our canonical Gospels. We have seen from Papias how strong was at first the preference for oral tradition; and we know that of written sources of information there were others besides our canonical Gospels. Learned Churchmen like Origen and Jerome still knew them well; they mention them, quote from

[1] ἀπομνημονεύματα ἃ φημι ὑπὸ τῶν ἀποστόλων αὐτοῦ καὶ τῶν ἐκείνοις παρακολουθησάντων συντετάχθαι. [2] συγγράμματα.

them. The Gospel of the Hebrews or according to the Hebrews, the Gospel according to the Ægyptians, the Gospel according to the Twelve Apostles, are thus mentioned. Again, there were the writings of which we quoted some way back a list from Eusebius.

The Gospel of the Hebrews was of great antiquity and currency; it was held to be the original of our St. Matthew, and often confounded with it. The Ebionites are said indifferently to receive no Gospel but that of *Hebrews*, and to receive no Gospel but that of *Matthew*. Jerome found in Syria, and translated, an Aramaic version of this old Gospel of the Hebrews, which he was at first disposed to think identical with our St. Matthew; afterwards, however, he seems to have observed differences. From this Gospel are quoted incidents and sayings which we do not find in the canonical Gospels, such as the light on Jordan at Christ's baptism, already mentioned by us in our first chapter; the appearance of the Lord after his resurrection to James, expressly recorded by Paul, but not in our Gospels; the words of Jesus to his startled disciples after the *Handle me and see* of our Gospels: 'For I am not a bodiless Ghost.'[1] We know that this Gospel of the Hebrews was used by the first generation of Christian writers after the apostolic age, by Ignatius, Justin Martyr, and Hegesippus. From it, or from

[1] οὐκ εἰμὶ δαιμόνιον ἀσώματον.

other old gospels attributed to Peter or James, come other sayings and stories strange to our Gospels, but in the earliest times current as authentic. Such a story is that of the birth of Jesus in a cave, mentioned by Justin, and familiar to Christian art; and such a saying is the saying of Christ, *Be ye approved bankers*,[1] quoted in the pseudo-Clementine Homilies and the Apostolic Constitutions, quoted by the Church historians Eusebius and Socrates, and by Clement of Alexandria, Origen, Ambrose, and Jerome.

Well, then, how impossible, when the Epistle of Barnabas simply applies the verse of the 110th Psalm, *The Lord said unto my Lord*, as Jesus applied it, or when it quotes simply as 'Scripture' the words *Many called, but few chosen*, —how impossible to affirm certainly that it refers to our canonical Gospels, and proves that by the end of the first century our Gospel-Canon was established! Yet this is what Tischendorf does all through his book on the Canon. Wherever he finds words in an early writer of which the substance is in our canonical Gospels, he assumes that from our canonical Gospels the writer took them, and that our Canon must already have existed. We will not speak of Tischendorf without remembering the gratitude and respect which, by many of his labours, he has merited. But his treatment of

[1] γίνεσθε τραπεζῖται δόκιμοι, or γίνεσθε δόκιμοι τραπεζῖται. In Jerome's Latin: 'Estote probati nummularii.'

the question proposed by him, *When were our Gospels composed?* is really, to any one who reads attentively and with a fair mind, absurd. It is as absurd on the apologetic side, as Dr. Volkmar's treatment of the quotation in the Epistle of Barnabas, *Many called, but few chosen*, is on the attacking side. Tischendorf assumes that the Epistle of Barnabas, in applying the 110th Psalm and in quoting *Many called, but few chosen*, must needs be referring to our canonical Gospels. But the writer of the Epistle of Barnabas gives no reference at all for his application of the words of the 110th Psalm. For the words, *Many called, but few chosen*, he refers simply to Scripture; and he elsewhere calls, let us add, the apocryphal Book of Enoch also *Scripture*. In applying the 110th Psalm he may have been going upon oral tradition merely. In quoting *Many called, but few chosen*, as Scripture, he was certainly quoting some written and accepted authority, but what we cannot possibly say.

In the times with which we are now dealing there is no quotation from any one of our Evangelists with his name, such as in Irenæus and from his time forward is usual. There is no quotation from the narrative of any one of the Synoptics in which the manner of relating or turn of phrase enables us to recognise with certainty the author. Sayings and doings of Jesus are quoted, but there is nothing to prove that they are quoted from our Gospels. More-

over, almost always, however briefly they may be quoted, they are not quoted quite as they stand in our Gospels. But it is supposed that they are quoted from memory, freely and loosely. The question then arises, is a *Canon* habitually and uniformly quoted in this way? If our Four Gospels had existed in the time of Clement of Rome or of Justin Martyr as the canonical four, of paramount authority and in the state in which we now have them, would these writers have uniformly quoted them in the loose fashion in which now, as is alleged, they do quote them?

Here we will give, for the benefit of the reader of *Literature and Dogma*,—who by this time is convinced, we hope, that we endeavour to let the facts about the Gospel-Canon fairly and simply speak for themselves,—we will give for his benefit a piece of experience which on ourselves had a decisive effect. The First Epistle attributed to Clement of Rome is, as every one knows, of high antiquity and authority. It probably dates from the end of the first century. Jerome tells us that it was publicly read in church as authorised Scripture. It is included in the Alexandrian manuscript of the New Testament, and one may say that it was within an inch of gaining, and not undeservedly, admission to our Canon. A good while ago, in reading this Epistle with the disputes about the Canon of the Gospels perplexing our mind, we came upon a quotation of the beginning of the

fifty-first Psalm. We read on, and found that as much as the first sixteen verses, or nearly the whole Psalm, was quoted. The Bible of Clement of Rome was the Greek Bible, the version of the Seventy. 'Well then, here,' said we to ourselves, 'is a good opportunity for verifying the mode of quoting the canonical Scriptures which is followed by an early Christian writer.' So we took the Septuagint, and went through the first sixteen verses of the fifty-first Psalm. We found that Clement followed his canonical original with an exactness which, after all we had heard of the looseness with which these early Christian writers quote Scripture, quite astonished us. Five slight and unimportant variations were all that we could find,—variations so slight as the omission of an *and* in a place where it was not wanted. One knows, from Origen and his labours of reformation, into how unsure a state the text of the Greek Vulgate had in the second century fallen; so that this exactitude of Clement was the more surprising.

Now, shortly before we came upon the fifty-first Psalm, we had remarked, in the thirteenth chapter of Clement's Epistle, a cluster of sayings from the Sermon on the Mount. We turned back with eagerness to them, and compared them with the like sayings in St. Matthew and in St. Luke.[1] Neither in wording nor in order

[1] We give the passage from Clement, which the reader can compare with the counterparts in Matthew and Luke for himself:—

did the Epistle here correspond with either of these Gospels; the difference was marked, although in such short, notable sayings there seems so little room for it. We turned to a longer cluster of quotations from the Sermon on the Mount in Justin Martyr's first Apology. It was with Justin Martyr precisely as with Clement; the wording and order in what he quoted differed remarkably from the wording and order of the corresponding sayings in our Gospels. The famous sentence beginning, *Render to Cæsar*, was quoted by Justin. Words so famous might well have been expected to be current in one form only, and their tallying in Justin with our Gospels would not at all prove that Justin quoted them from our Gospels. But even these words, as he quotes them, run differently from the version in our Gospels. So that these early writers could quote canonical Scriptures correctly enough when they were Scriptures of the Old Testament, but when they were Scriptures of the New they quoted them in quite another fashion.

We examined a number of other passages, and found always the same result, except in one curious particular. Certain prophetic passages of the Old Testament were quoted, not as they

ἐλεᾶτε ἵνα ἐλεηθῆτε· ἀφίετε ἵνα ἀφεθῇ ὑμῖν. ὡς ποιεῖτε, οὕτω ποιηθήσεται ὑμῖν· ὡς δίδοτε, οὕτως δοθήσεται ὑμῖν· ὡς κρίνετε, οὕτως κριθήσεται ὑμῖν. ὡς χρηστεύεσθε, οὕτως χρηστευθήσεται ὑμῖν· ᾧ μέτρῳ μετρεῖτε, ἐν αὐτῷ μετρηθήσεται ὑμῖν.

stand in the Septuagint, but exactly, or almost exactly, as they stand in our Gospels; at least, the variations were here as slight as those of Clement quoting from the Greek the fifty-first Psalm. Thus Justin quotes the passage from Micah, *And thou, Bethlehem*, etc., almost exactly as it is given in St. Matthew, although in the Septuagint it stands otherwise; and the passage from Zechariah, *They shall look on him whom they pierced*, as it is given in St. John, although in the Septuagint it stands otherwise. But this one point of coincidence, amid general variation, indicates only that passages of prophecy where the Greek Bible did not well bring out the reference to Christ, were early corrected among Christians, so as to let the reference appear; and that the Messianic passages are given in this corrected form both in our Gospels and in Justin. For it is in these passages that a literal, or almost literal, correspondence between them occurs, and in no others.

This satisfied us, and we were henceforth convinced that at the end of the first century, and nearly up to the last quarter of the second century, there existed beyond doubt a body of canonical Scripture for Christian writers and that they quoted from it as men would naturally quote from canonical Scriptures. Often they quote it literally and unmistakably; and therefore their variations from it, though they are sometimes greater, sometimes less, are yet no more

than what may be naturally explained as loose quoting, quoting from memory. But this body of canonical Scripture was the Old Testament. The variations from our Gospels we found to be quite of another character, and quite inexplicable in men quoting from a Canon, only with some looseness occasionally. And we felt sure, and so may the reader of *Literature and Dogma* feel sure, that either no Canon of the Gospels, in our present sense, then existed, or else our actual Gospels did not compose that Canon.

However, the author of *Supernatural Religion*, who has evidently a turn for inquiries of this kind, has pursued the thing much further. He seems to have looked out and brought together, to the best of his powers, every extant passage in which, between the year 70 and the year 170 of our era, a writer might be supposed to be quoting one of our Four Gospels. And it turns out that there is constantly the same sort of variation from our Gospels, a variation inexplicable in men quoting from a real Canon, and quite unlike what is found in men quoting from our Four Gospels later. It may be said that the Old Testament, too, is often quoted loosely. True; but it is also quoted exactly; and long passages of it are thus quoted. It would be nothing that our canonical Gospels were often quoted loosely, if long passages from them, or if passages, say, of even two or three verses, were sometimes quoted exactly. But from writers

before Irenæus not one such passage of our canonical Gospels can be produced so quoted. And the author of *Supernatural Religion*, by bringing all the alleged quotations forward, has proved it.

This, we say, the author of *Supernatural Religion* has proved; and here, at any rate, if not against miracles, he may claim to have been successful in establishing his complete induction. We call him a learned and exact writer from the diligence and accuracy with which he has conducted this investigation. He deserves the title, and we take the liberty to maintain it. His construing of Greek and Latin may leave something to be desired. His conception of the Bible and its religion seems to us quite inadequate. His rejection of evidence which does not suit his purpose makes him,—as it makes so many another critic, besides him, both among those who attack popular Christianity, and among those who defend it,—an untrustworthy guide. But this, which it is the main object of his book to show: that there is no evidence of the establishment of our Four Gospels as a Gospel-Canon, or even of their existence as they now finally stand at all, before the last quarter of the second century,—nay, that the great weight of evidence is against it,—he has shown, and in the most minute and exhaustive detail. We should say, with unnecessary detail; because a reader whose eyes and mind were open would

satisfy himself with much less. But the mass of Englishmen enjoy pounding away at details long after it ceases to be necessary. What they hate is having to face the new ideas which await them when the detail-hunt is done with, and to re-make and re-settle their minds. Probably, for producing an impression on the public, the style in which the author of *Supernatural Religion* has done his work is well chosen. We attach too,—for reasons which we shall give when we come to sum up the case as to the New Testament Canon, after we have dealt with the Fourth Gospel,—much less importance to the point he seeks to prove, than he and perhaps most people do. But his point, we say, he has proved. No fineness of accomplishment, no pursuit of the author of *Supernatural Religion* into side-issues, no discrediting of him in these, will avail to shake his establishment of his main position, where the facts are for him and he has collected them with pertinacious industry and completeness.

The upshot of all this for the reader of *Literature and Dogma* is, that our original short sentence about the record of the life and words of Jesus holds good. *The record*, we said, *when we first get it, has passed through at least half a century, or more, of oral tradition, and through more than one written account.*

CHAPTER V

THE FOURTH GOSPEL FROM WITHOUT

SOMETIMES a youthful philosopher, provoked at our disrespect towards metaphysics, tells us that he has been reading Hegel, and would greatly like to have a word with us about *being*. Our impulse is to reply that he had much better have been reading Homer, and that about Homer we, at any rate, had much rather he should talk to us. That divine poet is always in season, always brings us something suited to our wants. And now, when we have finally, after making good our general description of the Gospel-records, to make good our special estimate of the Fourth Gospel, and when, approaching the closer consideration of this Gospel, we are confronted by the theorisings of ingenious professors about it and might well be overawed by their exceeding vigour and rigour, a saying of Homer comes to our mind and raises our courage, and emboldens us to scrutinise the vigorous and rigorous theorisings with coolness. Yet the saying is not at all a grand one. We are almost

ashamed to quote it to readers who may have come fresh from the last number of the *North American Review*, and from the great sentence there quoted as summing up Mr. Herbert Spencer's theory of evolution: — 'Evolution is an integration of matter and concomitant dissipation of motion during which the matter passes from an indefinite incoherent homogeneity to a definite coherent heterogeneity, and during which the retained motion undergoes a parallel transformation.' Homer's poor little saying comes not in such formidable shape. It is only this:—*Wide is the range of words! words may make this way or that way.*[1]

But really, of nine-tenths of the theorising about the Gospels which comes to us from Germany, these few words of Homer give us just the right criticism. There stand the Gospel words. It is possible to put a certain construction upon them. Off starts the German professor whose theory this construction suits, and puts it. Presently he forgets that this was only a *possible* construction for the words to bear, and often, though a possible, not even a probable one. He assumes it to be the certain, necessary construction for the words. He treats it as such in all his arguments thenceforward; and his theory is certain, because, forsooth, the construction certainly to be placed on the Gospel words proves it.

[1] ἐπέων δὲ πολὺς νομὸς ἔνθα καὶ ἔνθα.—*Iliad*, xx. 249.

How many a vigorous and rigorous theory owes its force to this process! The Third Gospel is the Gospel of Paulinism, composed with a view to exalt Paul's teaching and to disparage the older apostles. Where are the proofs? The famous words to Peter, *Thou art Peter, and upon this rock will I build my church*, are not given in the Third Gospel. Well, it is a possible inference from that omission, that the writer meant to disparage Peter. But it is not the necessary inference, there is not even ground for saying that it is the probable inference. And yet, when Baur says that the words 'are completely ignored in the Third Gospel because the writer could not possibly recognise such a primacy of Peter,' all he really has to go upon is the supposed necessity of his inference.

In the same Gospel, Peter has been fishing all night, and has caught nothing. Jesus appears, and at his command the net is once more let down, and 'they inclosed a great multitude of fishes, and the net brake.' Here, says Dr. Volkmar, the writer meant to contrast the barren result of preaching the Gospel to the Jews with the fruitful result of preaching it to the Gentiles. If we concede to Dr. Volkmar, not that the writer certainly meant this, but that it is a not absolutely impossible construction to put on his words, we make him a very handsome admission. Yet the absolute *certainty* of this sort of construction is the proof for the

universalist and anti-Petrine character of the Third Gospel!

Finally, it is 'an ingenious conjecture' of Dr. Schwegler, that by the two crucified thieves, the one converted, the other impenitent, the writer of the Third Gospel intended to contrast Jew and Gentile, the obstinate rejection of Christ by the former, the glad acceptance of him by the latter. No doubt this may be called 'an ingenious conjecture,' but what are we to think of the critic who confidently builds upon it?

The Fourth Gospel, again, is an advance beyond the Third; it is composed with 'a profoundly calculated art,' as the Gospel of Universalism in the highest degree. How is this proved? It is proved because in relating the miraculous draught of fishes, — a miracle borrowed, we are told, from Luke, but placed by the borrower after the Resurrection, — the author of the Fourth Gospel declares that the net was not broken, whereas Luke says that it was. What can be clearer? The advanced Universalist means to indicate that the multitudes of the heathen world may be brought in to Christianity without any such disruption of the Christian Church as to his faint-hearted predecessor had seemed inevitable. The Third Gospel, again, speaks of two boats engaged in fishing, the Fourth of but one. What a progress, cries Strauss, is here! The peaceable coexistence of a Jewish and a Gentile Christianity

no longer satisfies the religious consciousness; it will be satisfied with nothing less than a Catholic Church, one and indivisible.

The Dutch are determined not to be beaten at this sort of criticism by the Germans. For the Germans, the artistic Universalist who composed the Fourth Gospel is still a writer wishing to pass himself off as the Pillar-Apostle John. For Dr. Scholten, in Holland, this is insufficient. For him, the disciple whom Jesus loved is an ideal figure representing the free Christian consciousness of a later time; corresponding to none of the original narrow-minded Jewish disciples, but in a designed contrast with them. This ideal figure it is who starts with Peter for the sepulchre and outruns him,—arrives first at his Lord. To be sure, Peter is the first to enter the sepulchre. What does that matter, when the ideal disciple, who enters after him, has the advantage over him that he 'saw and believed'? And what is meant, again, by Jesus saying to Peter of this same disciple: 'If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee?' Any reference to John and to the advanced age to which he went on living? Not at all. Jesus means that the free spiritual Gospel of the idealising artist, his latest expounder, is the true one and shall stand; that it shall endure indestructible until his own coming again.

Now, if it were positively established on other grounds that the case is with the author

of the Third Gospel, or with the author of the Fourth, just as these critics say, then we might have no such great difficulty, perhaps, in putting on the texts above quoted the construction proposed for them. But really it is only by placing this construction on the texts that the case as to their authors can be made out to be what these critics say. And when we are summoned to admit the construction as if it were the necessary, or even most probable one, we demur, and answer with the good Homer: *Wide is the range of words! words may make this way or that way.*

Sometimes the construction which is to prove the critic's theory has against it not only that it is but one possible construction out of many:—it has even more against it than this. The Paulinian author of the Third Gospel has for his great object, we are told, to disparage the older apostles. See, says Baur, how he relates the story of the raising of Jairus's daughter![1] If it were not his main object to disparage the Twelve, how could he have made their three eminent representatives, Peter, James, and John, figure in a situation which seems expressly designed to show them in an unfavourable light? 'When Jesus came to the house of Jairus,' says Luke,

[1] Baur, *Kritische Untersuchungen über die kanonischen Evangelien* (Tübingen, 1847), pp. 458 and 469.

'he suffered no man to go in save Peter and James and John, and the father and the mother of the maiden.' Now, Matthew does not mention this; and why? Because he does not write with Luke's object. For what follows? 'And all wept and bewailed her; but he said, Weep not, she is not dead but sleepeth. *And they laughed him to scorn*, knowing that she was dead. *And he put them all out.*'[1] Who are here, asks Baur, the laughers at Jesus, that are put out by him? 'Evidently the three apostles are of the number; who consequently here, in spite of their having been a considerable time in close intimacy with Jesus, only give a new proof of their spiritual incapacity!' And again: 'That the three most trusted of the disciples of Jesus behaved to him in such a way as to occasion his ordering them to leave him, *is the main point, which the whole representation of our Evangelist is directed to bring out!*' Was ever anything so fantastical? And to think that Baur should have found a brother critic of the Gospels, 'The Saxon *Anonymus*,' more fantastical than himself, whom he has to take seriously to task for his flights! In the first place, there is nothing whatever to show that the laughers in Luke's narrative, whom Jesus puts out, are his own three apostles and the father and mother of the maiden. It is far more

[1] Luke viii. 51-54. Compare Matt. ix. 23-25.

likely that they are, as in St. Matthew, 'the people.' But there is not only this against the sense imposed by Baur on the passage. The all-important words, *He put them all out*, are wanting in the two oldest and best manuscripts of the New Testament![1] They have probably crept into the text through a remembrance of corresponding words in St. Matthew: 'But when the people were put out.' And this is positively the evidence for 'the main point which the whole representation of our Evangelist is directed to bring out,'—the point that *the three most trusted of the disciples of Jesus behaved to him in such a way as to occasion his ordering them to leave him.* A precious main point indeed!

The sort of reasoning which proves this to be the Evangelist's main point is not reasoning at all, it is mere playing at reasoning. But how much of Baur's Biblical criticism is of this nature! We will try him once more. 'Pauline Universalism is recognisable as the view which prevails throughout the Third Gospel.'[2] Well, Baur has told us this again and again; we want some real proof of it. He proceeds to give his proof:—'Those declarations of Jesus in the First Gospel which have

[1] The Vatican and the Sinaitic.

[2] 'Gibt sich der Paulinische Universalismus als die Grundanschauung des Evangelium zu erkennen.'—Baur, *Geschichte der christlichen Kirche*, vol. i. p. 74.

a particularistic turn are absent from the Third.' Certainly this is important, if true; is it true? See how Baur proves it:—'That saying which is so characteristic of Matthew's Gospel,—the saying about the fulfilment of the law and its enduring validity,—Luke's Gospel has not. What Matthew's Gospel says of the indestructibility of the very smallest part of the law, Luke's Gospel says,[1] *according to the original reading*, of the words of Jesus.' According to the original reading? Do, then, our earliest manuscripts of the New Testament, or does one of them, or does any manuscript, read 'one tittle of *my words*,' instead of 'one tittle of *the law*'? Not a manuscript, old or new, important or unimportant. Only Marcion quotes Jesus as having said *one tittle of my words*; Marcion, who is handed down to us as having 'mutilated' Luke, and whose profound antipathy to Judaism and its law would just have led him to alter such a sentence as this. Let us allow all possible weight to Tertullian's admission that Marcion complained of the adulteration of the rule of Christianity, and professed to revert to what was genuine. Still there is nowhere a syllable to show that this *reverting* consisted in a return to the original, genuine text of Luke, whereas the common text and all the other Gospels were adulterated. Not one syllable is there to this effect; yet the

[1] Luke xvi. 17.

most explicit assurance to this effect would be requisite to make Baur's assertion even plausible. As the evidence stands, his *according to the original reading* is monstrous.

To put one's finger on the fallaciousness of the criticism in these cases will make us suspect it in others. There are questions of literary criticism where positive proof is impossible; where the assertor appeals to critical tact, and not to formal evidence. Still, when we have found a man arbitrary and fantastic in those judgments where he professes to go by formal evidence, there is likelihood that he will be arbitrary and fantastic in those also where he professes to go by critical tact. 'Mark was no epitomator,' says Baur; 'he was a man with a special turn for adding details of his own, in order to give the *rationale* of things, and to supply the logical explanation of them.' What sort of example does Baur bring of this? 'Mark,' says Baur,[1] 'prefixes to the words with which, in the other Synoptics, the story of the disciples taking the ears of corn concludes, *The Son of Man is Lord also of the Sabbath*, Mark prefixes to these words a proposition to give the reason for them: *The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath.*'[2] One would think that Mark's motive for inserting these words might be, that there was a tradition

[1] *Kritische Untersuchungen über die kanonischen Evangelien*, p. 554.
[2] Mark ii. 27, 28.

of their having been really spoken by Jesus, in whose manner they exactly are. But no, this is the very last explanation which ever occurs to a critic of the Tübingen School. All our Gospels are more or less *Tendenz-Schriften*, tendence-writings,—writings to serve an aim and bent of their several authors; and a Tübingen critic is for ever on the look-out for tendence in them. The words in Mark *cannot* be authentic, says Baur, because they *must* be an addition inserted to give the rational explanation of the words following them. But the ground for this *must* is really not in any necessary law of criticism, but only that it pleases Baur to say so. Mark's turn for little circumstantial details is indeed curious; but it is a thing to be noticed in passing, not to be pressed to this extravagant extent.

It is just the same with Baur's proof of another assertion: the assertion that the Sermon on the Mount in the First Gospel is a work of 'artistic reflection,' a body of sayings on different occasions, grouped by the Evangelist 'in one logically ordered whole, to produce a certain calculated total-effect.' The proof of this is that the Sermon on the Mount follows throughout 'a methodical march from point to point according to a determined idea.' That is to say, Baur determines an idea for the Sermon on the Mount, and makes it follow that idea methodically. But the idea, and the Sermon's conformity

to it, are neither of them given by the necessary laws of criticism, they are not facts commending themselves to every sound judgment. They are merely a construction which it is possible to put upon the words. But *wide is the range of words!* Very likely there may be in the Sermon on the Mount sayings belonging to more than one occasion; but very likely, nevertheless, the Sermon may not at all be a work of 'artistic reflection,' and not at all follow 'a methodical march from point to point.'

Evidence has three degrees of force: demonstration, probability, plausibility. Now, the truth is, that on very many questions like the above, which German critics of the Bible raise and treat as if they were matter for demonstration, demonstration cannot really be reached at all. The data are insufficient for it. Whether there was one original written Gospel, a single *schriftliche Urevangelium*, or whether there was a plurality of written sources, a *Mehrheit von Quellen-Schriften*,—a favourite question with these critics,—is a question where demonstration is wholly out of our power. Whether the co-existence in the First Gospel of passages which 'bear the stamp of Jewish Particularism,' and of passages which breathe 'another, freer spirit,' is due, as Dr. Schwegler maintains, to an incorporation of new and later elements with the original Gospel, is a question not really admitting of demonstration one way or the other. Whether the Second

Gospel, as Dr. Hilgenfeld asserts and Baur denies, is 'an independent Petrine Gospel representing the transition from the strict Judaic Christianity of Matthew to the law-emancipated Paulinism of Luke'; whether, as Dr. Volkmar contends, all our canonical Gospels are 'pure tendence-writings of the at first kept under, at last victorious Pauline spirit,' can never be settled to demonstration, either in the affirmative or in the negative. Whether, as Baur and Strauss confidently declare, the substitution by Luke, in reporting a speech of Jesus, of *adikia* for Matthew's *anomia*, of *unrighteousness* for *iniquity*, 'metamorphoses a Judaic outburst against Paul into a Paulinian outburst against Judaic Christianity'; whether Luke's Sermon in the *Plain* is meant to be opposed to the Sermon on the *Mount* of Matthew, no one can ever prove, and no one can ever disprove. The most that can be reached in these questions is probability or plausibility; and plausibility,—such a display of ingenuity as makes people clap their hands and cry *Well done!* but does not seriously persuade them,—is not much worth a wise man's ambitioning.

There remains probability. But it is not the necessity of a certain construction for certain texts which creates probability. It is absurd, as we have seen, to take such a necessity for granted. The probability of the thesis that our Four Gospels are 'pure tendence-writings of the at first kept under, at last victorious Pauline spirit,'

does not depend on the demonstrable certainty of inferences from any text or texts in them. It depends on considerations drawn from experience of human nature, and from acquaintance with the history of the human spirit, which themselves guide our inference from these texts. And what is the great help for interpreting aright the experience of human nature and the history of the human spirit, for getting at the fact, for discovering what is fact and what is not? Sound judgment and common-sense, bred of much conversance with real life and with practical affairs.

Now, 'nowhere else in the world,' declares, as we have already seen, Sir Henry Maine, 'is there the same respect for a fact as in England, unless the respect be of English origin.' He attributes this to the habits of strictness formed by the English law of evidence; but the English law of evidence is itself due, probably, to the practical character of the people. Faults this character has, and plenty of them. Much may be said against its indifference to learning and study, its neglect of organising research; much may be said in praise of Germany's superiority in these respects. Yet, after all, shut a number of men up to make learning and study the business of their lives, and how many of them, for want of some discipline or other, seem to lose all balance of judgment! Hear the amenities of organised research in Germany, hear

Dr. Volkmar on Tischendorf:—'Of every sovereign in the world he has begged decorations; in vain! people would not treat him seriously. Renan, in his life of the Messiah Jesus, never once names the Messiah Tischendorf!' Hear Tischendorf on Dr. Volkmar:—'The liedom which tramples under foot Church and science indifferently! stuck full of lying and cheating!' But indeed, for fear we should lose these flowers of learned compliment, Professor Max Müller,—who has a foot in both worlds, the English and the German,—transplants into an English review this criticism by Professor Steinthal on a rival:—'That horrible humbug! that scolding flirt! that tricky attorney! whenever I read him, hollow vanity yawns in my face, arrogant vanity grins at me.' And only the other day the newspapers brought us an address of Dr. Mommsen, in which the new Rector of the University of Berlin, with a charming crudity, gravely congratulated his countrymen on not being modest, and adjured them never to fall into that sad fault! These are the intemperances and extravagances which men versed in practical life feel to be absurd. One is not disposed to form great expectations of the balance of judgment in those who commit them. Yet what is literary and historical criticism but a series of most delicate judgments on the data given us by research,—judgments requiring great tact, moderation, and temper? These,

however, are what the German professor who has his data from research, and makes his judgments on them, is so often without, not having enough of the discipline of practical life to give it to him. We speak of judgments, be it observed, not in the exact sciences, but in matters where we deal with the experience of human nature and with the history of the human spirit.

Goethe seems to have strongly felt how much the discipline of a great public life and of practical affairs had to do with intelligence. 'What else is *cultur*,' he asks, in a remarkable passage, 'but a higher conception of political and military relations? Everything depends, for a nation, upon the art of bearing itself in the world, and of striking in when necessary.'[1] And he adds in a more remarkable sentence still: 'Whenever and wherever the French lay aside their Philistinism, they stand far above us in critical judgment, and in the comprehension of original works of the human spirit.'[2] He means that in France the practical life of a great nation quickened the judgment, and prevented fumbling and trifling. And we shall see what Germany does, now that she, too, has 'struck

[1] 'Was ist Cultur anderes als ein höherer Begriff von politischen und militarischen Verhältnissen? Auf die Kunst sich in der Welt zu betragen, und nach Erfordern dreinzuschlagen, kommt es bei den Nationen an.'

[2] 'So oft die Franzosen ihre Philisterei aufgeben und wo sie es thun, stehen sie weit über uns im kritischen Urtheil und in der Auffassung origineller Geisteswerke.'

sense for fact. We are much mistaken if it does not turn out that this ordeal makes great havoc among the vigorous and rigorous theories of German criticism concerning the Bible-documents. The sense which English people have for fact and for evidence will tell them, that as to demonstration, in most of those cases wherein our critics profess to supply it to us, *wide is the range of words*, and demonstration is impossible. As to probability, which in these cases is as much as can be reached, we shall discover that the German Biblical critics are in general not the likeliest people to reach it, and that their theories do, in fact, attain it very seldom.

Let us take the performance of the greatest and most famous of these critics, — Ferdinand Christian Baur,—upon the Fourth Gospel. 'It is Baur's imperishable glory,' says Strauss, himself in some respects a rival of Baur, 'to have succeeded in stripping the Fourth Gospel of all historical authority.' Baur has *proved*, it is said, that the Fourth Gospel was composed about the year 170 after Christ, in the heat of a conflict between Jewish and anti-Jewish Christianity, and to help the anti-Jewish side. It has a direct dogmatic design from beginning to end. With a profoundly calculated art, it freely treats the Gospel-story and Gospel-personages in the interests of this design. It develops the Logos-idea, and its Christ is a

dogma personified. Its form is given by the Gnostic conception of an antithesis of the principles of light and darkness,—an antithesis found both in the physical and in the moral world, and in the moral world exemplified by the contrast of Jewish unbelief with true faith. The author does not intend to deliver history, but to deliver his idea in the dress of history. No sayings of Jesus are authentic which are recorded in the Fourth Gospel only. The miracles of the Fourth Gospel are not, like those of the Synoptics, matter given by popular report and legend. They are all, with deliberate art, 'made out of the carver's brain,' to serve the carver's special purposes.

For example.[1] The first miracle in the Fourth Gospel, the change of water into wine, is invented by the artist to figure Jesus Christ's superiority over his precursor, and the transition and progress from the Baptist's preparatory stage to the epoch of Messianic activity and glory. The change of water into wine indicates this transition. Water is the Baptist's element; Jesus Christ's element is the Holy Ghost. But in the First Gospel the antithesis to the Baptist's element is not called Holy Ghost only, it is also called fire. In the Fourth Gospel this antithesis is, by means of the Cana miracle, figured to us as wine. 'Why,' asks Baur, 'should not the

[1] For what follows, see *Kritische Untersuchungen über die kanonischen Evangelien*, pp. 114-184.

difference and superiority of Jesus Christ's element be indicated by wine as well as fire? *Geist*, fire, wine, are all allied notions.'

Then come Nicodemus in the third chapter, the woman of Samaria in the fourth. They are created by the artist to typify two opposite classes of believers. Nicodemus, who holds merely to miracles, is the representative of Judaism,—Judaism which even in its belief is unbelieving. The woman of Samaria represents the heathen world, susceptible of a genuine faith in Christ. The same capacity for a true faith is observable in the nobleman of Capernaum; he must therefore be intended by the author for a heathen, and not, as is commonly thought, for a Jew.

We proceed, and come to the healing of the impotent man at the pool of Bethesda. Now the Jesus of the Fourth Gospel is the principle of life *and* light in contrast to the principle of death and darkness. The healing of the impotent man is a miracle designed to exhibit Jesus as the principle of life. Presently, therefore, it is balanced by the miracle wrought on the man born blind, in order that Jesus may be exhibited as the principle of light. The reader sees what an artistic composition he has before him in the Fourth Gospel. As Baur says, this is indeed a work where all is intention and conformity to plan; nothing mere history, but idea moulding history! Everything in the work is strictly, to

speak like the artists, *motived*. To say that anything in the Fourth Gospel is not strictly motived, 'is as good,' says Baur, 'as calling the Evangelist a very thoughtless writer.'

Here, then, we have a theory of genuine vigour and rigour. Already we feel its power, when we read in one of our daily newspapers that 'the author of the Fourth Gospel stands clearly revealed as the partisan and propagandist of a dogma of transcendental theology.'

Now Baur himself would have told us that the truth of his theory was certain, demonstrable. But we have seen what these critics call *demonstration*. That wine *may* figure the Holy Spirit is with them a proof that in the Cana miracle it *does*, and that the true account of that miracle is what we have seen. Demonstrably true Baur's theory of the Fourth Gospel is not, and cannot be; but is it probably true? To try this, let us, instead of imposing the theory upon the facts of the case and rejecting whatever facts do not suit it, — let us, in our plain English way, take the evidence fairly as it stands, and see to what conclusions it leads us about the Fourth Gospel.

III

What is the earliest piece of evidence we can find concerning the composition of this Gospel? It is given us in the already-mentioned Canon of Muratori, dating, probably, from about the year

175 after Christ. This fragment says :—'The fourth of the Gospels is by the disciple John. He was being pressed by his fellow disciples and (fellow) bishops, and he said : "Fast with me this day, and for three days ; and whatsoever shall have been revealed to each one of us, let us relate it to the rest." In the same night it was revealed to the Apostle Andrew that John should write the whole in his own name, and that all the rest should revise it.'

This is the earliest tradition ; and in Clement of Alexandria, who died A.D. 220, we find[1] the same tradition indicated. 'John last,' says Clement, 'aware that in the other Gospels were declared the things of flesh and blood, *being moved thereto by his acquaintances*, and being inspired by the Spirit, composed a spiritual Gospel.' To the like effect Epiphanius, in the latter half of the fourth century, says that John wrote *last*, wrote *reluctantly*, wrote because he was *constrained* to write, wrote in Asia at the age of ninety.[2]

Such is the tradition : that the Fourth Gospel proceeded from the Apostle John ; that it was the last written, and that it was revised by the apostle's friends. The theory, on the other hand, says that the Gospel proceeds from a con-

[1] In his *Hypotyposes*, quoted by Eusebius, *Hist. Eccles.* vi. 14.—τὸν μέντοι Ἰωάννην ἔσχατον, συνιδόντα ὅτι τὰ σωματικὰ ἐν τοῖς εὐαγγελίοις δεδήλωται, προτραπέντα ὑπὸ τῶν γνωρίμων, πνεύματι θεοφορηθέντα, πνευματικὸν ποιῆσαι εὐαγγέλιον.

[2] See Epiphanii *Panarium*, *Hær.* LI. 12.

summate artist unknown, who wrote it during or after the Paschal controversy in Asia Minor in the year 170, in order to develop the Logos-idea, and to serve other special purposes. Which are we to incline to, the theory or the tradition?

Tradition may be false; yet it is at least something, as we have before remarked, in a thing's favour, that men have delivered it. But there may be reasons why we cannot believe it. Let us see, then, what there is to make us disbelieve the tradition of Epiphanius, of Clement of Alexandria, and of the Fragment of Muratori. There is the miraculous form of the story, the machinery of dream and revelation; that, we know at once, cannot be historical. But it is the form in which a matter of fact was nearly sure, under the circumstances of the case, to have got delivered; and the gist of the tradition,—the Fourth Gospel's having its source in the Apostle John,—may be matter of fact still. What is there, then, against St. John's authorship of the Fourth Gospel?

We shall not touch questions of language, where the reader, in order to be able to decide for himself, must know the Oriental languages, and where, if he does not know them, he must take upon trust what is said. Our points shall be all such that an ordinary reader of plain understanding can form an opinion on them for himself. And we shall not concern ourselves with every point which may be raised, but shall

be content with what seems sufficient for the purpose in view.

Now, a plain reader will certainly, when his attention is called to the matter, be struck with the extraordinary way in which the writer of the Fourth Gospel, whom we suppose a Jew, speaks of his brother Jews. We do not mean that he speaks of them with blame and detestation; this we could quite understand. But he speaks as if they and their usages belonged to another race from himself,—to another world. The waterpots at Cana are set 'after the manner of *the purifying of the Jews*'; 'there arose a question between some of John's disciples *and a Jew about purifying*';[1] 'now *the Jews' Passover* was nigh at hand'; 'they wound the body of Jesus in linen clothes with spices, *as the manner of the Jews is to bury*'; 'there they laid Jesus, because of *the Preparation of the Jews*.' No other Evangelist speaks in this manner. It seems almost impossible to think that a Jew born and bred,—a man like the Apostle John,—could ever have come to speak so. Granted that he was settled at Ephesus when he produced his Gospel, granted that he wrote in Greek, wrote for Greeks; still he could never, surely, have brought himself to speak of the Jews and of Jewish things in this fashion! His lips and his pen would have refused to form such strange expressions, in whatever disposition he may have

[1] The text followed is that of the Vatican manuscript.

written; nature and habit would have been too much for him. A Jew talking of *the Jews' Passover*, and of a dispute of some of John's disciples *with a Jew about purifying?* It is like an Englishman writing of the Derby as *the English people's Derby*, or talking of a dispute between some of Mr. Cobden's disciples *and an Englishman about free-trade.* An Englishman would never speak so.

When once the reader's attention has been called to this peculiarity in the Fourth Gospel, other things will strike him which heighten it. The solemn and mystical way in which John the Baptist is introduced: 'There was a man sent from God whose name was John,'—how unlike the matter-of-fact, historical way in which John the Baptist is introduced by Jewish writers who had probably seen him, like the writer of the First Gospel, who at any rate were perfectly familiar with him, knew all about him! 'In those days came John the Baptist, preaching in the wilderness of Judæa.' How much more is the Fourth Gospel's way of speaking about John the Baptist the way that would be used about a wonderful stranger, an unknown! Again: twice the Fourth Gospel speaks of Caiaphas as 'high-priest of that year,' as if the Jewish high-priesthood had been at that time a yearly office, which it was not. It is a mistake a foreigner might perfectly well have made, but hardly a Jew. It is like talking

of an American President as 'President of that year,' as if the American Presidency were a yearly office. An American could never adopt, one thinks, such a way of speaking. Again: the disciple who, at the high priest's palace, brings Peter in, is called by the writer of the Fourth Gospel 'an acquaintance of the high priest.' One of the poor men who followed Jesus *an acquaintance* of a grandee like Caiaphas! A foreigner, not intimate by his own experience with the persons and things of Palestine, but seeing through a halo the disciples who were with Jesus in the great tragedy, might naturally have written so. But a Jew, a fisherman of Galilee, who knew quite well the distance and difference between the humble people in the train of Jesus and the rich, haughty, aristocratical priesthood at Jerusalem,—could it ever have occurred to *him* to commit an exaggeration, which is like the exaggeration of calling a London working-man, who is in the throng round a police-court during an exciting inquiry and has interest enough to get a friend in, 'an acquaintance of the Secretary of State'?

As the social distinctions of Palestine are confounded, so are its geographical distinctions. 'Bethany beyond Jordan'[1] is like 'Willesden beyond Trent.' A native could never have said it. This is so manifest, indeed, that in the later manuscripts *Bethany* was changed into *Bethabara*,

[1] John i. 28.

and so it stands in our version. But the three earlier and authoritative manuscripts all agree in *Bethany*, which we may pronounce certainly, therefore, the original reading. Nevertheless, the writer knew of the Bethany near Jerusalem; he makes it the scene of the raising of Lazarus. But his Palestinian geography is so vague, it has for him so little of the reality and necessity which it would have for a native, that when he wants a name for a locality he takes the first village that comes into his remembrance, without troubling himself to think whether it suits or no.

Finally,—and here, too, the plainest reader will be able with a little reflection to follow us, although to the reader of considerable literary experience the truth of what we say will be most evident,—the lofty strain of the prologue to the Gospel is nearly inconceivable as the Apostle John's. Neither form nor matter can well have come from him. At least, to suppose them his we must place ourselves in the world of miracle, —in the world where one is transported from Bagdad to Cairo by clapping one's hands, or in which one falls asleep, and wakes understanding the language of birds and hearing the grass grow. To this world we do not permit ourselves to have recourse. But in the world of fact and experience it is a phenomenon scarcely conceivable that a Galilean fisherman, changing his country and his language after fifty, should

have compassed the ideas of the introduction to the Fourth Gospel, and the style which serves as organ to those ideas, and, indeed, to the Gospel throughout. Paul was a highly educated man, and yet Paul never compassed ideas and a style of which the cast was Greek. The form in which the Fourth Gospel presents its ideas is Greek, — a style flowing, ratiocinative, articulated. The ideas of the introduction are the ideas in which Gnosticism worked, and undoubtedly there were Jewish Gnostics as well as Greek. But the strange and disfigured shape which the genuine Jewish mind, the mind of a Jew with the sort of training of the Apostle John, gave to Gnostic ideas when it worked among them, is well shown in the fragments of the Book of Elxai.[1] Not so are Gnostic ideas handled in the introduction to the Fourth Gospel. They are there handled with all the ease and breadth which we find in the masters of Greek Gnosticism, in Valentinus or Basileides.

Well, then, the reader will say, the Tübingen critics are right, and the tradition is wrong. The Fourth Gospel has not its source in the Apostle John; it is a fancy-piece by a Greek literary artist. But stop; let us look at the tradition a little more closely. It speaks of a *revision* of what the Apostle John produced.

[1] See the fragments collected in Hilgenfeld's *Novum Testamentum extra Canonem receptum*, vol. iii. pp. 153-167.

It speaks of a pressure put upon him, of his being *moved by his friends* to give his recollections, and of his friends having a hand in the work which stood in John's name. And if we turn to the Gospel itself, we find things which remarkably suit with this account of the matter. We find things which seem to show that the person who was the source of the Fourth Gospel did not produce his work himself, but that others produced it for him, and guarantee what is said, and appeal to his authority. They say: 'This is the disciple who testified these things and who wrote these things: and *we know* that his testimony is true.'[1] They say again: 'He who hath seen, hath borne witness, and his witness is true: and that man knoweth that he saith true, that ye may believe.'[2] *That man knoweth that he saith true!*—surely the actual composer of a work would never refer to himself so strangely. But if we suppose that the editors of a work are speaking of the man who supplied them with it, and who stands as their authority for it, the expression is quite natural.

And then we shall find that all things adjust themselves. In his old age, St. John, at Ephesus, has *logia*, 'sayings of the Lord,' and has

[1] John xxi. 24.—οὗτός ἐστιν ὁ μαθητὴς ὁ καὶ μαρτυρῶν περὶ τούτων καὶ ὁ γράψας ταῦτα, καὶ οἴδαμεν ὅτι ἀληθὴς αὐτοῦ ἡ μαρτυρία ἐστίν.

[2] John xix. 35.—ὁ ἑωρακὼς μεμαρτύρηκεν, καὶ ἀληθινὴ αὐτοῦ ἐστὶν ἡ μαρτυρία· καὶ ἐκεῖνος οἶδεν, ὅτι ἀληθῆ λέγει, ἵνα καὶ ὑμεῖς πιστεύητε.

incidents in the Lord's story, which have not been published in any of the written accounts that were beginning at that time to be handed about. The elders of Ephesus,—whom tradition afterwards makes into apostles, fellows with St. John,—move him to bestow his treasure on the world. He gives his materials, and the presbytery of Ephesus provide a redaction for them and publish them. The redaction, with its unity of tone, its flowingness and connectedness, is by one single hand :—the hand of a man of literary talent, a Greek Christian, whom the Church of Ephesus found proper for such a task. A man of literary talent, a man of soul also, a theologian. A theological lecturer, perhaps, as in the Fourth Gospel he so often shows himself,—a theological lecturer, an earlier and a nameless Origen ; who in this one short composition produced a work outweighing all the folios of all the Fathers, but was content that his name should be written only in the Book of Life. And, indeed, what matters literary talent in these cases? Who would give a care to it? The Gospel is John's, because its whole value is in the *logia*, the sayings of the Lord, which it saves ; and by John these *logia* were furnished. But the redaction was not John's, and could not be ; and at the beginning of the second century, when the work appeared, many there would be who knew well that John's the redaction was not. There-

fore the Church of Ephesus, which published the work, gave to it that solemn and singular *imprimatur:* 'He who hath seen hath borne witness, and his witness is true; *and that man knoweth that he saith true*, that ye may believe.' The Asiatic public, to whom the document originally came, understood what this *imprimatur* meant, and were satisfied. The Fourth Gospel was received in that measure in which alone at that early time,—in the first quarter of the second century,—any Gospel could be received. It was read with love and respect; but its letter did not and could not at once acquire the sacredness and fixity of the letter of canonical Scripture. For at least fifty years the Johannine Gospel remained, like our other three Gospels, liable to changes, interpolations, additions; until at last, like them, towards the end of the second century, by ever-increasing use and veneration, it passed into the settled state of Holy Scripture.

Now, this account of the matter explains a great deal of what puzzles us when we try to conceive the Fourth Gospel as having its source in the Apostle John. It explains the Greek philosophy and the Greek style. It explains the often inaccurate treatment of Palestinian geography, Palestinian usages, Jewish feelings and ideas. It explains the way in which the Jews are spoken of as strangers, and their festivals and ceremonies as things *of the Jews*. It explains,

too, the unsure and arbitrary way in which incidents of the Gospel-story are arranged and handled. Apologists say that the first chapter bears the very stamp of a Palestinian Jew's authorship. Apologists will say anything; they say that the Fourth Gospel must be St. John's, because it breathes the very spirit of the Apostle of Love, forgetting that our whole conception of St. John as the Apostle of Love comes from connecting him with this Gospel, and has no independent support from the testimony of writers earlier than Clement of Alexandria and Jerome, for whom the belief in the Johannine authorship was firmly established. In like manner, it is to set all serious ideas of criticism at defiance, to talk of the version of the calling of Peter in the first chapter, any more than the version of the clearing of the Temple in the second, as having the very stamp of a Palestinian Jew's authorship upon them. They have not. They have, on the contrary, the stamp of a foreigner's management of the incidents, scenes, and order of a Palestinian history.

The writer has new *logia*, or sayings of the Lord, at his disposal; and he has some new incidents. But his treasure is his *logia;* the important matter for him is to plant his *logia*. His new incidents are not, as Baur supposes, inventions of his own, any more than the incidents of the other three Evangelists; but all his incidents stand looser in his mind, are

more malleable, less impose themselves on him in a definite fashion than theirs. He is not so much at home amongst the incidents of his story; but then they lend themselves all the better on that account to his main purpose, which is to plant his *logia*. He assigns to incidents an order or a locality which no Jew would have assigned to them. He makes Jews say things and feel things which they could never have said or felt; but, meanwhile, his *logia* are placed. As we observed in *Literature and Dogma*:—'The narrative,—so meagre, and skipping so unaccountably backwards and forwards between Galilee and Jerusalem,—might well be thought, not indeed invented, but a matter of infinitely little care and attention to the writer of the Gospel; a mere slight framework, in which to set the doctrine and discourses of Jesus.'

Now there is nothing which the vigorous and rigorous critics of Germany, and their English disciples like the author of *Supernatural Religion*, more detest than the endeavour to make two parts in the Fourth Gospel,—a part belonging to John, and a part belonging to somebody else. Either reject it all, cries Strauss, or admit it all to be John's! By what mark, he adds, by what guide, except mere caprice, is one to distinguish the hand of the Apostle from the hand of the interpolator? No, aver these critics; the whole Gospel, without distinction,

must be abandoned to the demolishing sweep of inexorable critical laws!

But that there went other hands as well as John's to the making of the Fourth Gospel the tradition itself indicates, and what we find in the Gospel seems to confirm. True, to determine what is John's and what is not is a delicate question; nay, it is a question which we must sometimes be content to leave undetermined. Results of more vigour and rigour are obtained by a theory which rejects the tradition, and which lays down either that John wrote the whole, or that the whole is a fancy-piece. But that a theory has superior vigour and rigour does not prove it to be the right account how a thing happened. Things do not generally happen with vigour and rigour. That it is a very difficult and delicate operation to separate the different elements in the Fourth Gospel does not disprove that only by this operation can we get at the truth. The truth has very often to be got at under great difficulty.

No; but what makes the strength of those critics who deride the hypothesis of there being two parts, a Johannine part and another, in the Fourth Gospel, is the strange use of this hypothesis by those who have adopted it. The discourses they have almost all assigned to John; the discourses, and, from its theological importance, the prologue also. The second hand was introduced in order to account for difficulties

in the incidents and narrative. With the exception of some bits in the narrative, the whole Gospel is, for Schleiermacher, 'the genuine biographical Gospel of the eye-witness John.' Far from admitting the tradition which represents it as supplementing the other three, Schleiermacher believed that it preceded them all. Weisse regarded the prologue as the special work of the Apostle. Ewald supposed that in the discourses we have the words of Jesus transfigured by 'a glorified remembrance,' after lying for a long time in the Apostle John's mind. All this is, indeed, open to attack. No difficulties raised by the narrative can be greater than the difficulty of supposing the discourses of the Fourth Gospel to be St. John's 'glorified remembrance' of his Master's words, or the prologue to be the special work of the Apostle, or the Gospel to be, in general, the record at first hand of pure personal experience (*lauter Selbsterlebtes*). The separation of elements is not to be made in this fashion. But, made as it should be, it will be found to resolve the difficulties of the case, not in a way demonstrably right indeed (for demonstration is here out of our reach), but in a way much more probably right than the theory of Baur.

IV

Baur's theory, however, relies not only on its own internal certainty, but on external evidence.

It alleges that there is proof against the existence of the Fourth Gospel during the first three-quarters of the second century. It is undeniably quoted, and as John's, by Theophilus, Bishop of Antioch,[1] who wrote in the year 180. This, it is said, is the earliest proof of its existence; and it cannot have existed earlier.

But why? Let us put aside the Fragment of Muratori, of which the date and authority are disputed, and let us take facts which are undisputed. There is no doubt that Justin Martyr, in his first Apology, written probably in the year 147, says, speaking of Christian baptism and its necessity: 'For Christ said, *Except ye be born again, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.* Now to all men it is manifest that it is impossible that they who are once born should enter into the wombs of them that bare them.'[2] Every one will be reminded of the words to Nicodemus in the Fourth Gospel: 'Except a man be born from above[3] he cannot see the kingdom of God';

[1] *Ad Autolycum*, ii. 22. The first and third verses of the first chapter are quoted, and as John's, and exactly.

[2] καὶ γὰρ ὁ Χριστὸς εἶπεν, "Αν μὴ ἀναγεννηθῆτε, οὐ μὴ εἰσέλθητε εἰς τὴν βασιλείαν τῶν οὐρανῶν. ὅτι γε καὶ ἀδύνατον εἰς τὰς μήτρας τῶν τεκουσῶν τοὺς ἅπαξ γεννωμένους ἐμβῆναι, φανερὸν πᾶσίν ἐστιν. Compare John iii. 3, 4.

[3] The word ἄνωθεν may quite well mean *again*. Origen, referring in Greek to the famous story, *Domine, quo vadis? Vado Romam iterum crucifigi*, uses ἄνωθεν for *iterum*: ἄνωθεν μέλλω σταυρωθῆναι. But ἄνωθεν cannot well mean *again* in one place in a composition, and *from above* ('I am from above') in all other places. *Born from above*, however, is merely the fuller description of being *born again*.

and of the answer of Nicodemus: 'How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter a second time into his mother's womb and be born?' Justin does not quote the Fourth Gospel; he never expressly quotes any one of our Gospels. He does not quote word for word in such a manner that we can at once say positively: 'He is quoting the passage in our Gospel!' But then he never does quote in such a manner as to enable us to say this. All a candid yet cautious reader will affirm is, that Justin here has in his mind the same sayings as those given in the conversation between Jesus and Nicodemus in our Fourth Gospel. He may have quoted from some other source. Almost certainly, if he is quoting from our present Fourth Gospel, this Gospel was not a canonical Scripture to him, or he would have quoted it more correctly. But to no candid reader will it occur to think that what Justin has here in his eye is not at all the conversation with Nicodemus about being born again and its difficulties, but quite another matter, this passage from the First Gospel: 'Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.'[1] This is what critics of the Tübingen school advance, and we need hardly say that the author of *Supernatural Religion* follows suit. But to no plain reader would it ever occur to advance it; to no one except a

[1] Matt. xviii. 3.

professed theological critic with a theory. If our Fourth Gospel is to be a fancy-piece, and a fancy-piece not composed before the year 170, sayings and incidents peculiar to it must pass for inventions of its own, cannot be real traditional sayings known and cited by Justin long before. No; but on the other hand, if they *are* so known and cited, the Fourth Gospel cannot well be a mere fancy-piece, and we lose a vigorous and rigorous theory. If they are, and to any unbiassed judgment they clearly are, then it is probable, surely, that Justin, who used written records, had in his eye, when he cited the sayings in question, the only written record where we find them,—the Fourth Gospel, only this Gospel not yet admitted to the honours of canonicity. But at any rate, it is now certain that all sayings and incidents not common to this Gospel with the Synoptics are not to be set down as pure inventions.

But we can go back much farther than Justin. Some twenty-five years ago there was published at Oxford, under the title of Origen's *Philosophumena*, a newly-discovered Greek work. Origen's it is not; but because, besides giving the *Philosophumena* or doctrines of heathen philosophy, from which all heresies are supposed to spring, the work purports also to be a *Refutation of all Heresies*, and because Hippolytus, Bishop of the Port of Rome in the early part of the third century, wrote a work with this title, of which

the description in Photius well agrees with the so-called *Philosophumena*, Bunsen and others pronounced that here was certainly the missing work of Hippolytus. Against this we have the difficulty that the Paschal Chronicle, professing to cite textually in reference to the Quartodeciman controversy this work of Hippolytus, cites a passage which is not in our *Philosophumena*, although the Quartodeciman heresy is there refuted.[1] Bunsen is ready with the assertion that 'This passage *must* have existed in our work,' exactly as he was sure that in the Canon of Muratori the Epistle to the Hebrews *must* have been mentioned. But this is just the sort of assertion we will not allow ourselves to make; and we refrain, therefore, from pronouncing the *Philosophumena* to be certainly the *Refutation of all Heresies* by Hippolytus. Still the work is of the highest importance, and it gives its own date. The author was contemporary with Zephyrinus, and tells us of having had controversy with him. Zephyrinus was Bishop of Rome from the year 201 of our era to the year 219. To the heretics and heresies of the second century our author comes, therefore, very near in time, and his history of them is of extraordinary value.

In his account of the Gnostic philosopher Basileides, who flourished at Alexandria about the year 125 after Christ, he records the comments

[1] *Chronicon Paschale* (edition of Bonn), vol. i. p. 13.

of Basileides on the sentence in Genesis, *Let there be light*, and quotes as follows from Basileides, whose name he has mentioned just before:—'This, says he (Basileides), is that which is spoken in the Gospels: *That was the true light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world.*'[1] The words are quoted exactly as they are given in the Fourth Gospel;[2] and if we cannot pronounce certainly that *logia* of Jesus are quoted from one of our Gospels because they are to be found there, yet no one will dispute that if we find the reflections of one of our Evangelists quoted, they must surely have been taken from that Evangelist. Therefore our Fourth Gospel, not necessarily just as we have it now, not necessarily yet regarded as canonical Scripture, but in recognisable shape, and furnished with its remarkable prologue, already existed in the year 125.

The Tübingen critics have an answer for this. The writer of the *Philosophumena*, say they, mixes up the deliverances of the founder of a school with those of his followers,—what comes from Basileides or Valentinus with what comes from disciples of their school who lived long afterwards. The *he says* of the quotation from the Fourth Gospel is really, therefore, subjectless; it does not mean Basileides in particular. And

[1] *Philosophumena*, vii. 22. We follow, for the passage in St. John, the rendering of our version, although ἐρχόμενον probably belongs to φῶς and not to ἄνθρωπον. [2] John i. 9.

of this *subjectless he says* the author of *Supernatural Religion*, following the German critics, makes a grand point. If Basileides is not meant, but only one of his school, then the quotation from the Fourth Gospel will not date from A.D. 125, but from some fifty years later, when no doubt the Gospel had appeared.

Now it is true that the author of the *Philosophumena* sometimes mixes up the opinions of the master of a school with those of his followers, so that it is difficult to distinguish between them. But if we take all doubtful cases of the kind and compare them with our present case, we shall find that it is not one of them. It is not true that here, where the name of Basileides has come just before, and where no mention of his son or of his disciples has intervened since, there is any such ambiguity as is found in other cases. It is not true that the author of the *Philosophumena* habitually wields the *subjectless he says* in the random manner alleged, with no other formula for quotation both from the master and from the followers. In general, he uses the formula *according to them*[1] when he quotes from the school, and the formula *he says*[2] when he gives the dicta of the master. And in this particular case he manifestly quotes the dicta of Basileides, and no one who had not a theory to serve would ever dream of doubting it. Basileides, therefore, about the year 125 of our era, had before him

[1] κατ' αὐτούς. [2] φησί.

the Fourth Gospel. Schleiermacher talks wildly, no doubt, when in defiance of the tradition he claims for the Fourth Gospel a date earlier than that of the other three. But it is true that we happen to have an earlier testimony to words which can be verified as belonging certainly to the Fourth Gospel, than to any words which can be verified as belonging certainly to any one of the other three.

But this is not all the evidence afforded by the *Philosophumena*. The first heresies described are those of Oriental Gnostics, who preceded the Greek. The line of heretics commences with the Naasseni and the Peratæ, both of them 'servants of the snake';—not the Old Serpent, man's enemy, but 'the Catholic snake,' the principle of true knowledge, who enables his votaries to pass safely through the mutability and corruption which comes of birth. The Naasseni are the Ophites of Irenæus and Epiphanius. Their name is taken from the Hebrew word for the Greek *ophis*, a snake, and together with other Hebrew names in the account of them indicates, what we might expect, that as Jewish Christianity naturally preceded Greek Christianity, so Jewish Gnosticism preceded Greek Gnosticism. Moreover, the author of the *Philosophumena*, passing from this first batch of Gnostics to a second, in which are Basileides and Valentinus, expressly calls this second batch of Gnostics *the subsequent ones*.[1]

[1] *Philos.* vi. 6.—*νυνὶ δὲ καὶ τῶν ἀκολούθων τὰς γνώμας οὐ σιωπήσω.*

So we must take the Naasseni and the Peratæ, whom the author of *Supernatural Religion* dismisses in a line as 'obscure sects towards the end of the second century,' we must take them as even earlier than Basileides and the year 125.

These sects we find repeatedly using, in illustration of their doctrines, the Fourth Gospel. We do not say that they use it as John's, or as canonical Scripture. But they give sayings of Jesus which we have in the Fourth Gospel and in no other, and they give passages from the author's own prologue to the Fourth Gospel. Both the Naasseni and the Peratæ are quoted as using the opening verses of the prologue, though with a punctuation for certain clauses which is different from ours.[1] Both sects know of Jesus as *the door*. 'I am the door,' one of them quotes him as saying; the other, 'I am the true gate.'[2] The Peratæ have the sentence, 'As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up,' with only one slight verbal change.[3] With somewhat more of change they give the saying to the woman of Samaria: 'If thou hadst known,' is their version, 'who it is that asketh, thou wouldst have asked of him and he would have given thee living water

[1] ὃ γέγονεν is joined to ἐν αὐτῷ ζωὴ ἐστιν, not to οὐδὲ ἕν. The Naasseni insert a δέ before γέγονεν. *Philos.* v. 8, 16.

[2] *Philos.* v. 8, 17.

[3] ὃν τρόπον καθώς.—*Philos.* v. 16. Compare John iii. 14.

springing up.'[1] The Naasseni have, without any alteration, the famous sentence to Nicodemus in the Fourth Gospel: 'The Saviour hath said, *That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the spirit is spirit.*'[2] Again, they attribute to Jesus these words: 'Except ye drink my blood, and eat my flesh, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven. Howbeit, even if ye do drink of the cup which I drink of, whither I go, thither ye cannot enter.'[3] A mixture, one must surely confess,—a mixture, with alterations, of the same sayings that we find in the sixth and thirteenth chapters of St. John, and in the twentieth chapter of St. Matthew.

Any fair person accustomed to weigh evidence, and not having a theory to warp him, will allow that from all this we have good grounds for believing two things. First, that in the opening quarter of the second century the Fourth Gospel, in some form or other, already existed and was used. We find nothing about its being John's, it is not called Scripture, its letter is not yet sacred. It is used in a way which shows that oral tradition, and written narratives by other hands, might still exercise pressure upon its

[1] *Philos.* v. 9.—εἴρηκεν ὁ σωτήρ, Εἰ ἤδεις τίς ἐστιν ὁ αἰτῶν, σὺ ἂν ἤτησας παρ' αὐτοῦ καὶ ἔδωκεν ἄν σοι πιεῖν ζῶν ὕδωρ ἀλλόμενον. Compare John iv. 10.

[2] *Philos.* v. 7. Compare John iii. 6.

[3] *Philos.* v. 8.—ἐὰν μὴ πίνητέ μου τὸ αἷμα καὶ φάγητέ μου τὴν σάρκα, οὐ μὴ εἰσέλθητε εἰς τὴν βασιλείαν τῶν οὐρανῶν. ἀλλὰ κἂν πίητε, φησί, τὸ ποτήριον ὃ ἐγὼ πίνω, ὅπου ἐγὼ ὑπάγω, ἐκεῖ ὑμεῖς εἰσελθεῖν οὐ δύνασθε. Compare John vi. 53; xiii. 33; and Matt. xx. 22.

account of Jesus, might enlarge its contents, or otherwise modify them. But the Gospel in some form or other existed. Secondly, we make out that Baur and Strauss go counter to at least the external evidence, when they declare that all sayings of Jesus appearing in the Fourth Gospel, and not appearing in one of the Synoptics also, are late inventions and spurious. The external evidence, at any rate, is against this being so. And this is the point which mainly interests the reader of *Literature and Dogma*, for in that book we assured him that the special value of the sayings of Jesus in the Fourth Gospel is, that they explain Jesus and the line really taken by him. This they cannot do if they are spurious; and here, therefore, is the centre of interest for us in all these questions about the Fourth Gospel. Not whether or no John wrote it, is for us the grand point, but whether or no Jesus said it.

And that the sayings in the Fourth Gospel, at least the chief and most impressive of them, are genuine *logia* of Jesus, the external evidence goes to prove with a force, really, of which what we have hitherto said quite fails to give an adequate notion. The Epistle to the Hebrews, —which undoubtedly existed at the end of the first century, for it is so much used by Clement of Rome that he has been conjectured to be its author,—has the Johannine phrase, 'The shepherd of the sheep.'[1] Probably the Fourth

[1] Hebrews xiii. 20.

Gospel did not yet exist when the Epistle to the Hebrews was written; but what the use of the phrase in the Epistle to the Hebrews proves is, that the phrase was early current, and does not, therefore, come from an inventor late in the second century. Other phrases, connected with this one, have also the strongest confirmation of their authenticity. We have already seen how the earliest Jewish Gnostics were familiar with the saying: *I am the door*. Hegesippus, in the middle of the second century, relates that the Jews asked James the Just: 'What is the door of Jesus?'[1] and it requires a very vigorous and rigorous theory to make a man suppose that the Jews were here thinking of something in the Old Testament, and not of the saying of the Lord: *I am the door*. We have the testimony of the Canon of Muratori, that Hermas, the author of the *Pastor*, was brother to Pius, Bishop of Rome; and that he wrote his *Pastor* at Rome, while his brother Pius was sitting in the episcopal chair of the church of that city,[2]—that is, between the year 141 and the year 157. In the *Pastor* we find it written, that *the new gate* was manifested in the last days, 'in order that they which shall be saved might enter into the kingdom of God by it'; and it is added: 'Now the gate is

[1] Euseb. *Hist. Eccles.* ii. 23.

[2] 'In urbe Roma Hermas conscripsit, sedente cathedra urbis Romæ ecclesiæ Pio episcopo fratre ejus.'

the Son of God.'[1] The pseudo-Clementine Homilies cannot be accurately dated; but from their mode of quoting New Testament sayings and incidents,—which is that of Justin, and never alleges the name of a Gospel-writer,—we know that the work must have been written before 170 and the age of Irenæus. In the third Homily, Jesus is quoted as saying: 'I am the gate of life; he that entereth by me entereth into life.'[2] Presently, after the saying, *Come unto me all that travail,* another (a Johannine) saying of Jesus is quoted: 'My sheep hear my voice.'[3] Irenæus relies upon the authority of certain 'elders, disciples of the Apostles'; and he says that his elders taught that in the Messianic kingdom the saints should have different habitations in proportion to the fruit borne by them, and confirmed this by quoting the Lord's saying: 'In my Father's house are many mansions.'[4]

Finally, every one has heard of the dispute about the Epistles of Ignatius, martyred in the year 115. Of his seven Epistles, mentioned by Eusebius, there exist a longer and a shorter recension;—the longer recension amplifying things much in the same way in which the later manuscripts used for our version of the

[1] Hermæ *Pastor, Similitudo* ix. 12.
[2] *Clementis Romani quæ feruntur Homiliæ, Hom.* iii. 52.
[3] *Ibid.*
[4] Irenæus, *Adv. Hæreses,* v. 36.

Gospels have amplified, in the sixth chapter of the Fourth Gospel, Peter's confession of faith into *Thou art that Christ the Son of the living God*, from the original *Thou art the holy one of God* preserved by the Vatican and Sinaitic manuscripts. But a still shorter Syriac recension of the Epistles of Ignatius was found by Mr. Cureton, and this recension, besides, gives only three of the seven Epistles mentioned by Eusebius. We will not enter into the question whether the Syriac three do really annul the Greek seven; for our purpose it is sufficient to take the Syriac three only. For even in these three we have more than once the Johannine expression, *the prince of this world*.[1] We have: 'The bread of God I want, which is Christ's flesh, and his blood I want for drink, which is love incorruptible.'[2] We agree that we are not compelled to suppose that Ignatius took these expressions and ideas from the Fourth Gospel; but that *the prince of this world*, and *the bread which I will give is my flesh*, of the Fourth Gospel, are expressions and ideas of Jesus, and not inventions of a Greek literary artist after the year 170, the employment of these ideas and expressions by Ignatius does compel us to suppose.

Again, Baur maintained that it was impossible

[1] Ignatius, *Ad Ephesios* xvi.; *Ad Romanos*, at the end.

[2] *Ad Romanos* vii.—ἄρτον θεοῦ θέλω, ὅς ἐστιν σὰρξ Χριστοῦ, καὶ τὸ αἷμα αὐτοῦ θέλω πόμα, ὅ ἐστιν ἀγάπη ἄφθαρτος. The Greek recensions, both the longer and the shorter, after θέλω add ἄρτον οὐράνιον, ἄρτον ζωῆς.

to produce testimony outside the Fourth Gospel to a legend of any single Fourth Gospel miracle not common to it with the Synoptics. Soon afterwards the conclusion of the pseudo-Clementine Homilies was discovered; and in the nineteenth Homily, speaking of sins of ignorance, the author says: 'Our Master being asked concerning the man afflicted from his birth and who was restored to sight by him, whether this man sinned or his parents, that he was born blind, made answer: "Neither this man sinned nor his parents, but that the power of God should be made manifest through him."'[1] The miracle is clearly the one recorded in the Fourth Gospel, and in the answer of Jesus there is hardly the slightest verbal difference.

We may say, indeed, if we like, that the pseudo-Clementine Homilies were composed in the third or fourth century. We may say that not one word of Ignatius is genuine, that Irenæus did not mean to quote his elders, or that he misquoted them; we may say that the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews stumbled by chance on the expression *the great shepherd of the sheep;* that Hermas, author of the *Pastor*, was not brother to Pius, Bishop of Rome, and did not write the *Pastor* during his brother's episcopate. All this we may say if we like, and may

[1] *Hom.* xix. 22 (Dressel's edition).—*οὔτε οὗτός τι ἥμαρτεν, οὔτε οἱ γονεῖς αὐτοῦ, ἀλλ' ἵνα δι' αὐτοῦ φανερωθῇ ἡ δύναμις τοῦ θεοῦ.* Compare John ix. 2, 3.

bring many ingenious reasons to support it. But no plain man, taking facts fairly, would ever say so ;—only some professor with a theory to establish, a theory of vigour and rigour.

But if the Johannine sayings are in great part genuine, then a plain man will surely be disposed to accept the tradition that the Fourth Gospel is supplementary to the others, and that in John it had its source. The sayings form a class distinct from the sayings of the Synoptics. They must have come from some one who had been with Jesus, and who spoke with authority. Tradition says that they came from John at Ephesus ; and the form of the Johannine Gospel suits well enough, as we have seen, with this tradition. To be sure, we have the famous argument that the Fourth Gospel cannot have existed in the time of Papias, between the years 130 and 140 of our era, or Papias would have made mention of it ; and if Papias had made mention of it, Eusebius, from whom we get our knowledge of Papias, would have quoted the mention. Eusebius declares, says the author of *Supernatural Religion*, that he 'will carefully intimate' every early testimony to the Christian Scriptures, both to the Scriptures received and to the Scriptures disputed. But in the first place, the words used by Eusebius do not mean : *I shall carefully intimate.*[1] They mean : *I shall be glad to indicate ;*

[1] See Eusebius, *Hist. Eccles.* iii. 3. — προὔργου ποιήσομαι ὑποσημήνασθαι.

I shall think it an advantage to indicate. And to suppose that to even as much as is here promised Eusebius would closely stick, because he had promised it, is to know Eusebius very ill. Never, perhaps, was there any writer who told us so much that was interesting, and told it in so loose a fashion and with so little stringency of method, as the good Bishop of Cæsarea. In the second place, it is quite certain that another Gospel, the Third, existed in some shape in the time of Papias, for Marcion about the year 140 used it. And yet on the subject of the Third Gospel, as well as the Fourth, Papias as quoted by Eusebius is wholly silent.

But then, again, there is the vigorous and rigorous theory of Professor Scholten that John never was at Ephesus at all. If he had been, Papias and Hegesippus must have mentioned it; if they had mentioned it, Irenæus and Eusebius must have quoted them to that effect.[1] As if the very notoriety of John's residence at Ephesus would not have dispensed Irenæus and Eusebius from adducing formal testimony to it, and made them refer to it just in the way they do! Here, again, we may be sure that no one, judging evidence in a plain fashion, would ever have arrived at Dr. Scholten's conclusion; above all, no one of Dr. Scholten's great learning and ability. It is just an hypothesis for a man

[1] See Dr. Scholten's treatise in the German translation, *Der Apostel Johannes in Kleinasien* (Berlin 1872), pp. 24, 36.

professorially bound to accomplish a feat of ingenuity, what the French call a *tour de force*; —to produce a new theory of vigour and rigour. We gladly make Professor Lightfoot a present of such foreign theories to put along with our home-grown theory of the One Primeval Language. The only distinction to be drawn, perhaps, is, that whereas the foreign theories, German or Dutch, come from having too much criticism, from an hypertrophy, as the doctors might say, of the critical organ; our British-born theory comes rather from not having criticism enough, from an absence of the critical organ altogether.

And now, in conclusion, for the internal evidence as to the Fourth Gospel.

CHAPTER VI

THE FOURTH GOSPEL FROM WITHIN

To any fair judge of evidence, the external evidence is in favour of the belief that the Fourth Gospel had its source in the Apostle John. But what is relied on, as above all fatal to this belief, is the internal evidence. The internal evidence is supposed to lead us with overpowering force to the conclusion that the Fourth Gospel is a fancy-piece by a Gnostically disposed Greek Christian, a consummate literary artist, seeking to develop the Logos-idea, to cry up Greek Christianity and to decry Jewish, and taking for the governing idea of his composition the antithesis between light and darkness. Everything in the Fourth Gospel, we are told, is profoundly calculated in this sense. So many miracles, and in such a graduation, as were proper to bring out fully the contrast between light and darkness, life and death, Greek willingness to believe and Jewish hardness of heart, so many miracles, and no more, does the Fourth

Gospel assign to Jesus. The whole history of the Last Supper and of the Crucifixion is subtly manipulated to serve the author's design. Admirable as is his art, however, he betrays himself by his Christ, whose unlikeness to the Christ of the Synoptics is too glaring. His Christ 'is a mere doctor; morality has disappeared, and dogma has taken its place; for the sublime and pregnant discourses of the Sea of Galilee and the Mount of Olives, we have the arid mysticism of the Alexandrian schools.' So that the art of our Greek Gnostic is, after all, not art of the highest character, because it does not manage to conceal itself. It allows the Tübingen critics to find it out, and by finding it out to pull the whole of the Fourth Gospel to pieces, and to ruin utterly its historical character.

Now here, again, in what these critics say of the internal evidence offered by the Fourth Gospel, the external evidence in some respects makes it hard for a plain man to follow them. The Gnostic author, they say, governed by his idea of the antithesis between light and darkness, assigns to Jesus no more miracles than just what are required to bring out this antithesis. Therefore the last two verses of the twentieth chapter, which speak of the 'many other signs which are not written in this book,' are spurious. Like the whole twenty-first chapter which follows, they are

a later addition by some one ignorant of the artist's true design. Well, but in the seventh chapter we find the Jewish people asking:[1] 'When the Christ comes, will he do more miracles than this man does?' and in the sixth chapter it is implied[2] that the miracles of Jesus were, as the Synoptics represent them, numerous. Did the artist forget himself in these places; or is it the Tübingen critics who have forgotten to tell us that in these places, too, the text is spurious? In the eleventh chapter we have a like oversight on the part of somebody, either the artist or (which one would hardly have thought likely) his German interpreters. The chief priests and Pharisees are, by some mistake, allowed to say: 'This man doeth many miracles.'[3] In the twelfth chapter matters are even worse; it is there said that the Jews would not believe in Jesus 'though he had done so many miracles before them.'[4] No doubt this is spurious, and in omitting to tell us so the critics fail a little in vigour and rigour. But, on the whole, what admiration must we feel for the vigour and rigour which in spite of these external difficulties can see so far into a millstone, and find such treasures of internal evidence there, as to be able to produce a theory of the Fourth Gospel like Baur's?

[1] Verse 31. [2] Verse 2.
[3] Verse 47. [4] Verse 37.

The internal evidence, then, is what the rejectors of the Fourth Gospel confidently rely on. But to us the internal evidence seems to point by no means to a speculative genius, a consummate artist, giving to Christianity a new form of his own, adopting a certain number of sayings and doings of the real Jesus from the Synoptics, but inventing for Jesus whatever he did not thus adopt. Much more it seems to us to point to a sincere Christian, a man of literary talent certainly and a Greek, but not a consummate artist; having traditions from John, having, above all, *logia* from John, sayings of the Lord, and combining and presenting his materials in the way natural to him. The Evangelist's literary procedure is that of a Greek of ability, well versed in the philosophical speculation of his time, and having the resources of Greek style and composition at his command. But when one hears of a consummate artist, an idealising inventor, when one hears of a gifted writer arranging his hero's life for effect, and freely making discourses for him, one thinks of Plato. Now, the writer of the Fourth Gospel is no Plato. The redaction and composition of this Gospel show literary skill, and indicate a trained Greek as their author, not a fisherman of Galilee. But it may be said with certainty, that a literary artist, capable of inventing the most striking of the sayings of Jesus to

Nicodemus or to the woman of Samaria, would have also made his composition as a whole more flawless, more artistically perfect, than the Fourth Gospel actually is. Judged from an artist's point of view, it has blots and awkwardnesses which a master of imaginative invention would never have suffered his work to exhibit. Let us illustrate this by examples, taking, as our rule is, no case which is not clear, and where the plain reader may not be expected, if he will only take the trouble to look carefully for himself at the passages we quote, to follow us without doubt or difficulty.

II

Our Evangelist has, we say, to place and plant records of Jesus supplied to him by John. But he has to place them without a personal recollection of the speakers and scenes, and without a Jew's instinct for what, with such speakers and scenes, was possible and probable. He combines and connects, but his connection is often only exterior and apparent, not real.

For example. No artist of Plato's quality would have been satisfied with the connection in the discourse of Jesus reported at the end of the fourth chapter, from the thirty-fifth verse to the thirty-eighth: 'Say not ye, There are yet four months, and then cometh harvest! behold, I say unto you, Lift up your eyes,

and look on the fields, that they are white already to harvest; and he that reapeth receiveth wages, and gathereth fruit unto life eternal, that he that soweth and he that reapeth may rejoice together. *For herein is that saying true: One soweth and another reapeth. I sent you to reap that whereon ye have bestowed no labour; other men have laboured, and ye are entered into their labours.*' Surely there are here two parts, of which that one which we have given in italics has a motive quite different from the motive of the other which precedes it. The motive of the first is the ripeness of the harvest and the guerdon of the reapers. The motive of the second is the admission of the disciples to reap what they had not sown. Both have all the character of genuine sayings of Jesus, but there is no real connection between them, only they coincide in pairing a sower with a reaper. Jesus did not make continuous speeches, jointed and articulated after the Greek fashion. He uttered pregnant sentences, gnomic sayings; and two sets of such sayings, quite distinct from each other, which were among the Greek editor's store of *logia*, we have here. But to this editor the continuous and jointed form of Greek discourse seemed the natural one; and therefore, caught by the verbal coincidence, he blends the two sets of sayings into one, and claps a *for* in between them to establish a connection. It

is a matter of no great importance. The two *logia* of Jesus are safely there, and the real relation between them was sure to be brought out by time and scrutiny. It is only of importance as a gauge of the Evangelist's artistic faculty. A consummate artist, inventing for Jesus, could not have been satisfied with such a merely seeming and verbal connection.

More striking is the artistic failure at the beginning of the tenth chapter. We will remark, that on any supposition of a consummate artist and of perfect motiving, the mode of introducing all the lovely group of sayings about 'the good shepherd' and 'the door' is quite unaccountable. But let that pass, and let us look at the sayings themselves. Who can doubt that here, again, we have two separate sets of *logia* of Jesus :—one set which have *I am the good shepherd* for their centre, and another set which have for their centre *I am the door ;* and that our Evangelist has thrown the two together and confused them ? Beautiful as are the sayings even when thus mixed up together, they are far more beautiful when disentangled. But the Evangelist had a doorkeeper and a door and sheep in his first parable ; and he had another parable, in which was a 'door of the sheep.' Catching again at an apparent connection, he could not resist joining the two parables together, and making one serve as the explanation of the other.

To explain the first parable, and to go on all

fours with it, the second ought to run as follows: 'I am the door of the sheep. All that *climb up some other way* are thieves and robbers; but the sheep *do not hear* them. I am the door; by me if any man enter, *he is the shepherd of the sheep.*' The words in italics must be substituted for the words now in the text of our Gospel;[1] and Jesus must stand, not as the door of salvation in general, but as the door by which to enter is the sign of the true teacher. There can be no doubt, however, that the words now in the text are right, and that what is wrong is the connection imposed on them. The seventh and ninth verses are a *logion* quite distinct from what precedes and follows, and ought to be entirely separated from it. Their *logion* is: 'I am the door of the sheep. I am the door: by me if a man enter he shall be saved, and shall go in and out and find pasture.' The eighth verse belongs to the first parable, the parable of the shepherd; not to the parable of the door. It should follow the fifth verse, and be followed by the tenth. Jesus says of the sheep: 'A stranger will they not follow, but will flee from him, for they know not the voice of strangers. All that ever came before me are thieves and robbers, but the sheep did not hear them. The thief cometh not but to steal and to

[1] See John x. 8, 9. Instead of ἦλθον πρὸ ἐμοῦ we must read ἀναβαίνουσιν ἀλλαχόθεν, instead of ἤκουσαν we must read ἀκούουσιν, and ποιμήν ἐστιν τῶν προβάτων instead of σωθήσεται καὶ εἰσελεύσεται καὶ ἐξελεύσεται καὶ νομὴν εὑρήσει.

kill and to destroy ; I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly. I am the good shepherd.'

Piecing his *logia* together, seeking always a connection between them, the Evangelist did not see that he was here injuring his treasures by mixing them. But what are we to think of a consummate artist, inventing freely, and capable of producing, by free invention, such things as the most admirable of the sayings attributed to Jesus in the Fourth Gospel ;—what are we to think of such an artist, combining in cold blood his invented sayings of Jesus so ill, that any one with eyes in his head can detect a better combination for them ?

The reader, probably, will follow us without much difficulty here. But certainly he will have no difficulty in following us if we take the last words of the fourteenth chapter, *Arise, let us go hence*, and assert that no consummate artist, no Plato, would ever have given us that. Beyond all manner of doubt, Jesus never said in one connection : 'As the Father gave me commandment, even so I do ; arise, let us go hence ; I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman,' and so on, without the least sign of rising or going away, but with the discourse continuing throughout three more chapters. How the Evangelist could have come to make him say it, is the question. Probably, with the commencement of the fifteenth chapter the writer passed to

a fresh set of notes, containing another set of sayings of Jesus; and he marked the transition by inserting between the end of one set and the beginning of the next the words: 'Arise, let us go hence.' They were traditional words of Jesus, as we see from the 'Rise, let us be going,'[1] of St. Matthew; and the composer of the Fourth Gospel may have thought they would come in serviceably at this point. What he thought, we can only conjecture; but that no man freely inventing, not arranging and combining, and above all that no consummate artist, would ever have dreamed of placing those words at that point, we may affirm with the utmost confidence. Certainly there needed an imaginative intellect not less fine than Plato's to invent for Jesus such a saying as: 'The hour cometh and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth.' But conceive a Plato ordering the march of his composition thus: 'Arise, let us go hence; I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman!'

To the same category of defects of composition, inexplicable on the theory of a consummate artist freely inventing, but quite intelligible if we suppose a literary arranger sometimes embarrassed in dealing with his materials, for which he has the profoundest reverence, belong those curious jolts in the narrative which are occasioned, as we believe, by the author having John's very words

[1] Matt. xxvi. 46.

in his memory, and being determined to preserve them. Such a jolt occurs in introducing the dialogue with the woman of Samaria. 'Jesus, tired with his journey, sat *thus*[1] by the well.' Thus? how? There has not been a word to tell us, and the expression as it stands is incongruous. But the writer, probably, had in his mind John's own words: 'Jesus, tired with his journey, sat, *as I have been telling you*, by the well'; and he could not forbear using them. The same formula appears in two other places, and in both it probably is a relic of John's own narrative. 'He, lying *as I am telling you* on Jesus' breast, saith unto him: Lord, who is it?'[2] And again: 'After these things, Jesus manifested himself again to his disciples at the Sea of Tiberias; and he manifested himself *as I am going to tell you*.'[3] In these two cases to preserve John's words does not create any awkwardness; but the writer still preserves them even when it does.

He preserves them, again, without duly adjusting the context to them, in the forty-fourth verse of the fourth chapter. 'After the two days he departed thence into Galilee. *For Jesus himself testified that a prophet hath no honour in his own country*.' That was a reason for staying away from Galilee, not for going there. But the writer has John's words about the testimony of Jesus in his mind, and hastens to give them

[1] οὕτως, John iv. 6. [2] John xiii. 25. [3] John xxi. 1.

without preparing their way by saying: 'And this he did, notwithstanding his own testimony.' The embarrassed sentences about the return to Capernaum, in the sixth chapter, owe their embarrassment, not improbably, to the same cause: to John's words sticking in the writer's memory, and not being properly fused by him with his own narrative.

In like manner, who can read without a shock of surprise, in the relation of the feeding of the five thousand among the hills beyond the Sea of Galilee, that abrupt and motiveless sentence: 'Now the passover, the feast of the Jews, was nigh'?[1] The most fanciful and far-fetched explanations are offered. But who would not prefer the simple and natural explanation, that the words are a relic of John's original narrative which had been brought in by him to date his story; that they were fast lodged in our Evangelist's memory, and that he was loath to lose them? They are a little touch of detail, just like: 'These things he said in the treasury as he taught in the temple'; or like: 'It was then the feast of dedication at Jerusalem; it was winter, and Jesus walked in the temple in Solomon's porch.'[2] They are exactly the expressions which a man telling a story would be likely to use; but our author preserves them in his regular composition, whether they suit the context or no. And an author such as we

[1] John vi. 4. [2] John viii. 20; x. 22.

suppose our Evangelist to be was likely enough to do this; but a consummate artist, freely following his invention, does not do things thus negligently.

III

These are grounds for the improbability of Baur's theory which suggest themselves from a defectiveness of artistic construction in the Fourth Gospel. Other grounds of improbability are suggested by defects of philosophical grasp. It is alleged that our Evangelist improves on the Jesus of the Synoptics, invents his profoundest things for him. But it can be made as clear as light, to any unbiassed and attentive reader, that this wonderful inventor does not always himself fully understand the very things he is supposed to be inventing, obscures them by unintelligent comment on them. One instance of this we have given in *Literature and Dogma*. Jesus says: 'If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink.'[1] Then, with a reminiscence of a passage in the Second Isaiah he adds: 'He that believeth in me, as the Scripture saith, there shall flow out of his belly rivers of living water.' Who can doubt that Jesus here meant to say that the believer's faith,—the faith of the follower of Christ,—should be an eternal source of refreshment? But the Evangelist proceeds to comment on the saying of Jesus, and to give what is, in

[1] John vii. 37-39. Compare Isaiah lviii. 11.

his view, the proper explanation of it. And the explanation he gives is as follows: 'But this spake he of the Spirit (*Pneuma*) which they that believe on him should receive; for the Holy Spirit was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified.' Nothing can be more natural than that a Christian of the first or second century should wish to date all comforts of the Spirit from after the famous effusion of *Pneuma* subsequent to Christ's death. But surely the true sense of this saying of Jesus is clear; and it is clear, too, that it is a narrowing and marring of his words to put our Evangelist's mechanical construction upon them. The reporter who puts it fails to grasp the words fully, deals with them unintelligently. And how incredible that a writer should fail to seize rightly the clear sense of a saying invented by himself!

Again, take a like case from the eighteenth chapter. Jesus had said of his disciples: 'None of them is lost but the son of perdition.'[1] Then comes the arrest, and the speech of Jesus to the band which arrested him: 'I have told you that I am he; if therefore ye seek me, let these go their way.'[2] He gives up himself, but puts his disciples out of danger. His speech is just what we might have expected; but instantly our Evangelist adds that he made it '*in order that the saying might be fulfilled which he spake: Of them whom Thou hast given me have I lost*

[1] John xvii. 12. [2] John xviii. 5-9.

none.' Can anything be more clear than that the two sayings have nothing at all to do with one another, and that it is a mechanical and narrowing application of the first-mentioned saying which makes it lead up to the second? In the first, eternal salvation is the theme; in the second, safety from a passing danger. And could the free and profound inventor of the first saying have been so caught by the surfaces of things, as to make it the mere prophecy of the second?

Jesus over the heads of all his reporters!—this idea is for us our constant guide in reading the Gospels. It is, we are convinced, the only safe one. But the Tübingen professors reverse the idea, and say that in the Fourth Gospel it is the reporter who is over the head of Jesus. In the concluding chapters of this Gospel the philosophical author, they say, so frames the discourse of Jesus that his resurrection is presented 'as an internal phenomenon continually being accomplished in the believer's consciousness.' No doubt this view of the resurrection is indicated in the Fourth Gospel, as it is indicated also by St. Paul. But the question is, does it come from Jesus himself, or was it invented by the more spiritual among his followers to give a profounder sense to the physical miracle of his resurrection? We confine ourselves at present to the Fourth Gospel, and we say: 'True, the resurrection of Christ is

there suggested as a phenomenon accomplishing itself in the believer's consciousness. The idea is a profound one; it needed a great spirit to conceive it. If the author of the Fourth Gospel conceived it, we may allow that he carries the significance of the resurrection higher than the Synoptics carry it; higher than the Jesus of the Synoptics visibly carries it. But if he is the author of this idea, he will present it firmly and clearly. If he presents it confusedly, then he probably got the idea from Jesus, and did not quite understand it.' How, in fact, does he present it?

All through the discourses of Jesus in the Fourth Gospel, the attentive reader may perceive that there are certain fundamental themes which serve as *nuclei* or centres, appearing repeatedly and in several connections, with a form sometimes shorter, sometimes more expanded. It is of great importance to a right understanding of the Fourth Gospel that we should discover in such cases the primitive theme, the original *logion* of Jesus. Now this, or at least the nearest approach to it, will in general be given by the theme in its shorter and less expanded form. Very likely Jesus may himself have used a theme on several occasions, and himself have sometimes given to it a more expanded form; still, from the theme in its simplest and shortest form, we probably get our best clue to what was said by Jesus.

Two such primitive themes in the long discourse of Jesus before his arrest are these:—*I go to the Father*,[1] and: *I go away, and come again to you.*[2] Let us add to these two a third: *A little while and ye see me not, and again a little while, and ye shall see me.*[3] These three sayings appear and reappear, they come in different connections, they take forms somewhat varying. But they are primitive themes; they give us probably the nearest approach possible to the words actually uttered by Jesus.

This, then, is what we have:—*I go to the Father. I go, and come again to you. A little while and ye see me not, and again a little while and ye shall see me.* Now it is alleged, and truly, that the Fourth Gospel suggests a view of the resurrection of Jesus as an internal phenomenon accomplishing itself in the believer's consciousness. The basis on which this allegation must rest is supplied by the three *logia* which we have quoted.

But the three *logia* lend themselves either to the announcement of a physical resurrection or to the announcement of a spiritual resurrection. Everything depends on their context and

[1] ὑπάγω πρὸς τὸν πατέρα.—John xvi. 17. This is probably the primitive theme; we have also: ὑπάγω πρὸς τὸν πέμψαντά με (vii. 33, and xvi. 5); πρὸς τὸν πατέρα μου ὑπάγω (xvi. 10); ἀφίημι τὸν κόσμον καὶ πορεύομαι πρὸς τὸν πατέρα (xvi. 28).

[2] ὑπάγω καὶ ἔρχομαι πρὸς ὑμᾶς.—John xiv. 28.

[3] μικρόν, καὶ οὐ θεωρεῖτέ με, καὶ πάλιν μικρόν, καὶ ὄψεσθέ με.—John xvi. 17.

connection. And by piecing things together, by putting these *logia* in the front, by connecting them immediately with other *logia* given by our Evangelist, by dropping out things he inserts between, we can get at a resurrection announced by Jesus which is clearly spiritual. 'I go to the Father; I go, and come again to you. A little while and ye see me not, and again a little while and ye shall see me. I will not leave you desolate, I will come to you. Yet a little while and the world seeth me no more; but ye see me, because I live and ye shall live.' A disciple here asks how it is that they shall see him, and that the world shall not. Jesus answers: 'If a man love me, he will keep my word; and my Father will love him, and we will come to him, and make our abode with him. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid. I go away and come again to you.'[1] And this resurrection of Jesus is connected by him with the coming of the Paraclete, the Spirit of truth, the new light, who should bring out in the hearts of the disciples the real significance of Jesus and of what he had said.[2]

Thus placed and connected, the primitive ἔρχομαι, the *I come again* of Jesus, gives us, no doubt, the resurrection of Christ as 'an internal phenomenon accomplishing itself in the believer's consciousness.' It gives it us as being this in

[1] John xvi. 10; xiv. 28; xvi. 16; xiv. 18, 19, 23, 27, 28.
[2] John xiv. 23-26.

Jesus Christ's own view and prediction of it. The same idea is preserved for us by the First Epistle of St. John, an Epistle which cannot well have been written by our Evangelist, its style is so unlike his. But the Epistle deals with many of the ideas dealt with by our Gospel; and it presents the *abiding* in Jesus, and in his Father, as the accomplishment of the promise of eternal life made by Jesus to his followers.[1]

The idea is so fruitful and profound an one, that if our Evangelist had ever fairly grasped it, still more if he had conceived and invented it, he could hardly have so dealt with it as to leave us in doubt whether he himself entertained it or not. He could no more do this than Paul could have left us in doubt whether he himself entertained his great idea of the *necrosis*,—of the dying and resurrection of Jesus accomplishing themselves in this life in the believer's personal experience. The mind which, while fully accepting the physical miracle of the resurrection, could yet discern that the phenomenon, to be made fruitful, must have a moral and a spiritual significance given to it,—such a mind would certainly have been impressed deeply by such an idea, and have had it distinct and firm. But our Evangelist so arranges his materials as to make the reference of ἔρχομαι and ὄψεσθε to a spiritual resurrection very dubious, to overlay

[1] 1 John ii. 24, 25.

it with other things, and to obscure it; while their reference to a physical resurrection is brought out distinctly. 'In my Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. For I go to prepare a place for you, and if I go, I will prepare a place for you. I come again, and will take you unto myself, that where I am ye may be also.'[1] There can be little doubt that the primitive theme of ἔρχομαι πρὸς ὑμᾶς, *I come again unto you*, is here so used and connected as to make it point decisively to a physical resurrection. And this key for the whole strain being once given, the impression left by that other primitive theme, μικρὸν καὶ ὄψεσθέ με, *a little while and ye shall see me*, is in the main an impression to the same effect. 'A little while and ye see me not, and again a little while and ye shall see me. Ye shall weep and lament; ye shall be sorrowful, but your sorrow shall be turned into joy. Ye have sorrow now; but I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no man shall take from you.'[2] Here the whole wording and connection are such that it seems clear the commentators have rightly interpreted the mind of the Evangelist, when they make this passage, and the theme μικρὸν καὶ ὄψεσθέ με, a prophecy of the approaching physical resurrection of Jesus.

Must we then suppose that to a spiritual

[1] John xiv. 2, 3. The text followed is that of the Vatican manuscript. [2] John xvi. 19, 20, 22.

resurrection such sayings as the three primitive themes we have quoted do not really refer, but may be made to signify it only as a secondary and after meaning, brought in for purposes of edification, and originally hidden in them, perhaps, for those purposes? This, no doubt, will be the character assigned to the words both by official theology and by popular religion. To us, however, it seems certain that to a spiritual resurrection the words primarily and really point, and that our Evangelist has obscured their true scope. For him, as for Christendom long after him, Jesus Christ's physical resurrection stood, and could not but stand, a phenomenon fixed, immense, overpowering; a central sun attracting everything to it. But experience slowly and inevitably reveals that phenomena of this kind do not actually happen. Romulus does not mount into heaven, Epimenides does not awake, Arthur does not return. Their adoring followers think they do, think they have promised it;—but they do not, have not. We have, then, to account for the firm belief of the first Christians in the physical resurrection of Jesus, when this resurrection did not actually happen. We can only account for it from things really said by Jesus, which led them to expect it. That Jesus was a fanatic, expecting and foretelling his own physical resurrection,—deceived like his followers, but so filling them with his own belief that it prevailed and

triumphed with them when he died,—is an explanation which the whole account we have of Jesus, read seriously, shows to be idle. His disciples were misled, therefore, by something Jesus did actually say, which had not really the sense that he should physically rise from the dead, but which was capable of lending itself to this sense, and which his disciples misunderstood and imagined to convey it.

And, indeed, they themselves tell us that this is what actually happened. Only, what was in truth *misunderstanding*, they call *understanding*. They themselves tell us that they unconsciously exercised a creative pressure, long after the time when they were going about with Jesus and hearing him, on sayings and doings of their Master. 'When he was risen from the dead,' they tell us, after recording one of his prophetic speeches, '*his disciples remembered that he had said this*.'[1] Even if one had not known beforehand that from the nature of the case it was impossible for the records of Jesus in our Gospels to have been notes taken down day by day, as by a Saint-Simon or a Boswell, here is an Evangelist himself telling us in so many words that they were not. 'These things understood not his disciples at the first,' he tells us again, after relating an incident which afforded a remarkable fulfilment of prophecy, 'but when Jesus was glorified *then remembered they* that these

[1] John ii. 22.

things were written of him, and *that they had done these things unto him.*'[1] They recorded, then, the sayings of Jesus about his resurrection long after they had been uttered, and when the belief in his physical resurrection was firmly fixed in their minds.

But even after his death, 'as yet,' they tell us of themselves, 'they knew not the Scripture that he must rise again from the dead.'[2] This affords the most irrefragable proof that the sayings of Jesus about his resurrection cannot originally have been just what our Gospels report; that these sayings, as they now come to us, must have been somewhat moulded and accentuated by the belief in the resurrection. If Jesus had simply said to the Twelve the very words our Gospels report him to have said, the Twelve could have been in no ignorance at all of 'the Scripture that he must rise again from the dead,' and in no doubt at all that they were to count on his rising. 'He took unto him the Twelve, and said unto them: Behold we go up to Jerusalem, and all things that are written by the prophets concerning the Son of Man shall be accomplished. For he shall be delivered unto the Gentiles, and shall be mocked and spitefully entreated, and spitted on; and they shall scourge him, and put him to death; and the third day he shall rise again.'[3] It is in vain that the Evangelist adds: 'And they understood

[1] John xii. 16. [2] John xx. 9. [3] Luke xviii. 31-33.

none of these things, and this saying was hid from them, neither knew they the things which were spoken.'[1] If Jesus had spoken merely as he is here reported, if what he said had had no peculiar connection and significance given to it by something else which he also said, if he had simply thus laid down in black and white, as the phrase is, his death and resurrection as going to happen, the disciples could not have helped understanding him. It would have been quite impossible for them to make that astounding declaration, which yet is evidently the plain truth, that even up to the days which followed his death, 'as yet they knew not the Scripture that he must rise again from the dead.' Something was no doubt said by Jesus not unlike what the Evangelist reports, something which easily adapted itself to the character of a simple and literal prophecy of the resurrection, when that event had, as was believed, taken place. But the precise speech put into the mouth of Jesus, that speech and nothing more at all upon the subject, he cannot have uttered.

The Third Gospel, which reports the speech just quoted, is the Gospel which guides us to the discovery of what Jesus can have originally and actually said about his rising again on the third day. He was told that if he did not leave Jerusalem Herod would put him to death. He made answer: 'Go ye and tell that fox, Behold,

[1] Luke xviii. 34.

I cast out devils and I do cures to-day and to-morrow, *and the third day I shall be perfected.*'[1] Having for ever before his mind the humble and suffering Servant of our fifty-third chapter of Isaiah, and labouring for ever to substitute this in his disciples' minds as the Messias-ideal, instead of the brilliant and triumphant Conqueror of popular Jewish religion, Jesus here, beyond all doubt, following the prophet,[2] spoke of his violent and ignominious end as his perfection and victory. That violent end he, as was natural, could plainly foresee and often predicted. Here he predicts it in this wise: 'On the third day I shall be perfected.' What made him say: *On the third day?*[3] We know how he loved to possess himself of locutions of the prophets and to use them. For instance, in that well-known saying, 'Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me that I am mild and lowly in heart, and ye shall find rest unto your souls,' the concluding phrase, *Ye shall find rest unto your souls*, is a reminiscence of Jeremiah.[4] And in like manner

[1] *τῇ τρίτῃ ἡμέρᾳ τελειοῦμαι.*—Luke xiii. 32. The text of the Vatican manuscript is followed.

[2] See Isaiah liii. 10, 11.—'It pleased the Eternal to bruise him, he hath put him to grief. When he hath made his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the Eternal shall prosper in his hand; he shall see of the travail of his soul and be satisfied.'

[3] He talked, also, of his rising from the dead, without the addition of the words *on the third day*, or *in three days*. See Mark ix. 9, 10, where the disciples are represented as puzzled, and as *συνζητοῦντες τί ἐστιν τὸ ἐκ νεκρῶν ἀναστῆναι.*

[4] Jeremiah vi. 16.

his phrase, *On the third day I shall be perfected*, is a reminiscence of the prophet Hosea. Amid the ruin of Israel, in the eighth century before Christ, Hosea had said: 'Come and let us return unto the Eternal; for he hath torn and he will heal us; *after two days will he revive us, on the third day we shall rise again.*'[1] 'We shall be restored *presently*,' Hosea means: and, 'I shall be perfected *presently*,' is what Jesus means.

Here we lay our finger, almost certainly, upon the veritable foundation for the belief that Jesus had himself announced he would rise from the dead on the third day. Let us seek to combine the scattered *logia*, transposed, some of them to the time after his death, which in a certain degree enable us, through the cloud of his disciples' inadequate apprehension and of legend and marvel, to follow the line of light of the Divine Master.

The root of everything with Jesus is, as we just now said, the effort, the eternal effort, to substitute as the Messias-ideal in the mind of his followers the Servant, mild and stricken, for the regal and vengeance-working Root of David. And he knew, that the victory of this right Messias-ideal his own death, and that only, could found. 'O fools and slow of heart at

[1] Hosea vi. 1, 2. In the Greek Bible of the Seventy the words are: *ἐν τῇ ἡμέρᾳ τῇ τρίτῃ ἀναστησόμεθα, on the third day we shall rise again.* Compare this with the words in Luke: *τῇ τρίτῃ ἡμέρᾳ τελειοῦμαι*; and again, *τῇ ἡμέρᾳ τῇ τρίτῃ ἀναστήσεται*, Luke xiii. 32, and xviii. 33.

taking in all that the prophets have spoken! *must not* the Messiah suffer these things, and enter into his glory? Behold, we go up to Jerusalem, and the Son of Man shall be betrayed unto the chief priests and scribes, and they shall deliver him to the Gentiles to crucify. Nevertheless, I do cures to-day and to-morrow; we must work the works of him that sent me while it is day, the night cometh when no man can work. I must walk to-day and to-morrow and the day following, and the third day I shall be perfected. All things written by the prophets for the Son of Man shall be accomplished. He shall be delivered to the Gentiles, and mocked and outraged and spit upon; and they shall scourge him and put him to death; and the third day he shall rise again. Except a grain of corn fall and die, it abideth alone; but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit. As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up; and I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me.'[1]

Yes, *thus it was written that the Christ should suffer, and* should *rise from the dead the third day.*[2] Inevitably the disciples materialised it

[1] Luke xxiv. 25, 26; Matt. xx. 18, 19; Luke xiii. 32; John ix. 4 (in the Vatican manuscript); Luke xiii. 33, and xviii. 31-33; John iii. 14, xii. 24, and xii. 32. For *mocking*, see Psalm xxii. 7; for *scourging* and *spitting*, see Isaiah l. 6. The traits used by prophet and psalmist in delineating the stricken Servant are to be conceived as always vividly present to the mind of Jesus.

[2] Luke xxiv. 46. The Vatican manuscript is followed.

all, wrested it all into a prophesying of bodily reappearance and miracle. And they did also with the words: 'I go to the Father; I go away and come again to you; a little while and ye see me not, and again a little while and ye shall see me.' To these words the disciples gave a turn, they placed them in a connection, to suit the belief which alone, after the death of Jesus, could reassure and console them; — the belief in his speedy resuscitation and bodily reappearance on earth, his temporary re-withdrawal and ascension into heaven, to be followed soon by his triumphal bodily advent to avenge and judge.

It could not but be so. *It was written that in his name should be preached to all nations repentance unto remission of sins;*[1] and only in this way could the work proceed. Only in this way, through profound misapprehension, through many crude hopes, under the stimulus of many illusions, could the method and secret, and something of the temper and sweet reason and balance of Jesus, be carried to the world. Only thus, through natural and national *extra-belief* reinforcing their real love to their Master and zeal to propagate his doctrine, could the weak arm of the disciples acquire energy enough to hold aloft the word of life, set up the kingdom of Christ, found the true Israel, and bring in everlasting righteousness.

[1] Luke xxiv. 47.

But the promises and predictions of their Master were, nevertheless, not what they fancied. He had said: 'Ye shall see me again, because I live and ye shall live; if a man keep my saying he shall never see death. If ye love me and keep my words, I will come unto you and make my abode with you.'[1] They construed this into: 'Ye shall see me, because I will come again and take you unto myself to reign in the kingdom of the saints in the New Jerusalem.'[2] The genuine promise of Jesus was the promise of a spiritual resurrection; and this promise his disciples misapprehended, misconnected, and obscured. Only on this supposition is even their own version of the history intelligible.

Far, therefore, from inventing the idea of the resurrection as an internal phenomenon accomplishing itself in the believer's consciousness, the author of the Fourth Gospel transmits the idea, indeed, but obscures it. He saved it for us, as in that second harvest of the *logia* of Jesus he saves for us so much which is precious. He saved it from being lost, and added it to the indications which survive for us of the line truly taken by Jesus. But from his very mode of delivering it, we can see that he is not an artist inventing it, but a reporter transmitting it imperfectly.

[1] John xiv. 19; viii. 51; xiv. 23.
[2] John xiv. 3; Matt. xix. 28.

IV

Furthermore, Baur's theory of the artistic Greek Christian inventing all things with a deep-laid design to damage Jewish Christianity, and to exalt Christ's divinity, is upset by the admission of things contrary to the alleged design. A free inventor, inventing with the express aim of doing damage to Jewish Christianity, would never have made Jesus say: '*Salvation is of the Jews.*'[1] A free inventor, inventing to impair the credit of Peter and the original Apostles, would never have made Peter enter the sepulchre first, or throw himself into the sea, or receive the charge: *Feed my sheep.*[2] A free inventor, inventing from a zeal to establish the dogma of Christ's personal divinity, would never have made Jesus give the turn to his calling himself *the Son of God* which is given in the tenth chapter, when Jesus appeals to the authority of the Old Testament for those being called *Gods* to whom the word of God came, and asks why he, then, may not call himself the Son of God?[3] 'Why haggle about words and definitions in these matters?' he in fact asks; 'all you can say about them is approximate merely.' But the whole question of the dogma of Christ's personal divinity is a question of

[1] John iv. 22. [2] John xx. 6; xxi. 7, 16.
[3] John x. 34-36.

words and definitions in the very sphere where Jesus pronounced such questions to be vain. All these things may be ingeniously explained by Baur now that they stand there in the Gospel, and challenge explanation from him. But, had Baur's theory of the Fourth Gospel been true, they would never have stood there for him to explain.

Finally, the theory of the consummate artist implies that the Fourth Gospel is a work proceeding from the imaginative intellect. But we deny (and here, too, the attentive reader will not, we think, find it hard to follow us), we deny that the Fourth Gospel has the character of a work proceeding from the imaginative intellect. It has the character of a work proceeding from the soul. It is profoundly and solemnly religious. It is the work of a man who, we grant, like all the reporters of Jesus, understood him but imperfectly; who gives us much which is not Jesus, much which comes from himself and his time, much which is addition and legend. But it is the work of a man who gives us this seriously and in good faith, and whose attitude of mind is not that of a freely inventing artist. He is too much subjugated by Jesus to feel free to deal with him in this fashion, as a mouthpiece for his own purposes and his own ideas. He does sometimes attribute his own ideas to Jesus, but unconsciously; and

when he does, we can perceive that he is doing so. If he had attempted it consciously all through his Gospel, he would have produced something quite different from what we have, and we should easily have found him out. He would have given us a work where Jesus would have spoken, all through, as he now speaks from the sixteenth verse of the third chapter to the twenty-first,—a passage in which our theological lecturer evidently lectures us through the mouth of Jesus. For his mind did not hold itself so easily and independently towards Jesus,—no serious Christian's did or could,—as to suffer him to play freely with Jesus, to throw himself into his character, to use him as a vehicle for saying, but in character and with verisimilitude, whatever the user wanted to convey. Plato might do this with Socrates, but the author of the Fourth Gospel could not do it with Jesus. And the safe analogy to take, in considering what for our Evangelist in dealing with his subject could and did happen, is the analogy not of Plato but of Paul.

The old school of apologists was fond of urging that the Fourth Gospel could only have been the work of one of the original chief Apostles, it is so excellent. Baur had no difficulty in replying to this, that in Paul we have a Christian who had probably never even seen Jesus, who was certainly not one of the original chief Apostles; and who yet

is at least equal to any of them, and whose productions surpass theirs. Why, therefore, may we not have, he argued, in the author of the Fourth Gospel a second gifted outsider like Paul, but whose name has remained unknown, because it was essential for his purpose that it should do so, and that his work should point mysteriously to the Apostle John as its author?

Certainly we, for our part, have no backwardness in admitting that outside of the primitive circle of the Apostles there might arise Christians, like Paul, capable of making invaluable contributions to the New Testament. But we think that none of them could have done what Baur's theory supposes the author of the Fourth Gospel to have done. St. Paul himself could not have done it. The attitude of their minds towards Christianity and its Founder was too earnest and reverential to allow it. When Paul quotes a *logion* like that exquisite *logion* quoted by him at Miletus, but not found in any one of our Evangelists, *It is more blessed to give than to receive*,[1] he is clearly quoting Jesus, as he says he is, not artistically inventing for Jesus, not original. His manner when he is original we know, and it is quite different :—*I try not mine own self* (*for I am conscious of nothing to myself, yet am I not hereby justified*), *but he that trieth me is the Lord*.[2]

[1] Acts xx. 35. [2] 1 Cor. iv. 3, 4.

Imagine St. Paul sitting down to recommend the dogma of justification by faith, through means of a fancy Gospel composed of *logia* invented for Jesus, and suiting his character as *It is more blessed to give than to receive* suits his character! Paul could not have done it; any sound critic will feel that he could not. So, too, with the author of the Fourth Gospel. Where the *logia* are suited to the character of Jesus, they come from Jesus. Where they are not, there we have the theological lecturer merely expanding a theme given by Jesus, developing or thinking that he develops it. But he remains himself in doing so. To possess himself as a dramatist of the personage of Jesus, to fix his sentiments and his whole part for him, as would be implied by inventing the fundamental themes instead of merely developing them, he would not have felt himself free.

The question for us will be, then: *Are* there fundamental themes discoverable in the Fourth Gospel, and peculiar to it, which are quite according to the character of Jesus, and to his recognised habit of speech? Because, if there are, our Evangelist has not invented them, but they must come from Jesus.

Now that there are *logia* peculiar to the Fourth Gospel, which entirely suit the character and the habit of Jesus as these are known to us from the Synoptics, we can hardly

conceive any one denying; except, indeed, he have a thesis to make good which constrains him. Let us bring forward a few of them: '*My kingdom is not of this world.—In my Father's house are many mansions.—The good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep.—Other men laboured, and ye are entered into their labours.—The night cometh, when no man can work.—The servant abideth not in the house for ever, the son abideth for ever.—A woman when she is in travail hath sorrow because her hour is come; but as soon as she is delivered of the child she remembereth no more her anguish, for joy that a man is born into the world.*'[1] Except a man be, we say, in the clutches of some tyrannous theory, we can hardly conceive his denying that these *logia* are as perfectly and naturally in the character of Jesus as are the most characteristic *logia* found in the Synoptics, such as: *Render Cæsar's things to Cæsar, and God's things to God;* or, *No man having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God;* or, *Foxes have holes and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man hath not where to lay his head.*[2]

V

Yet the Tübingen professors and our Liberal newspapers must surely have something to go

[1] John xiv. 2; x. 11; iv. 38; ix. 4; viii. 35; xvi. 21.
[2] Matt. xxii. 21; Luke ix. 62; Matt. viii. 20.

upon, when they declare that the Jesus of the Fourth Gospel speaks quite differently from the Jesus of the Synoptics, and propound their theory of the Gnostic philosopher inventing, with profoundly calculated art, his fancy Gospel. No doubt they have. Jesus never can have delivered the long connected harangues, or entered into the formal development of his own nature and dignity, or made the endless repetitions, which are in the Fourth Gospel attributed to him. All this is so absolutely contrary to his manner, which we know both from his sayings in the Synoptics and from express testimony, that every rule of criticism bids us suspect it. The sayings in the Synoptics will be present to every one's mind; two or three of them, indeed, characteristic specimens, we have just brought forward. Justin's famous sentence has been again and again quoted: 'Short and concise are the sayings that came from him, for he was no sophist, but his word was power divine.'[1] And equally express is the following testimony, perhaps not so familiar, given by the pseudo-Clementine Homilies: 'His wont was to make concise utterances touching the things of concernment to the truth.'[2] A better description of the style of his sayings could hardly be given. They

[1] *βραχεῖς δὲ καὶ σύντομοι παρ' αὐτοῦ λόγοι γεγόνασιν, οὐ γὰρ σοφιστὴς ὑπῆρχεν, ἀλλὰ δύναμις θεοῦ ὁ λόγος αὐτοῦ ἦν.*

[2] *Hom.* xvii. 6.—*περὶ τῶν τῇ ἀληθείᾳ διαφερόντων συντόμως τὰς ἀποφάσεις ποιεῖτο.*

were *concise utterances touching the things of concernment to the truth.* The character of his parabolic and figured teaching tells its own story, and needs no describing; what distinguished his direct teaching was this its *gnomic* or maxim-like character.

These gnomic sayings of Jesus the Evangelists had to place in their narrative, and to provide for them a setting and a connection. The Greek editor of the Fourth Gospel provides this setting in a very different style from the Synoptics, just because he is a Greek, a man of literary skill and philosophical acquirements, and with an intellect trained in the Greek fashion. The gnomic form of teaching was not unknown in Greek philosophy, but at the Christian era this form was to Greek writers an archaic one. They had come to dovetail their thoughts into each other, join their sentences by articulations, and so frame their matter into one continuous discourse, just as we do now with ours; indeed it is from the Greeks that the world has learnt to do it. And in this Greek fashion the Fourth Gospel was composed.

The author of the First Gospel, on the other hand, was a Hebrew; and to a Semitic people the gnomic form, the delivering one's thought in detached sentences, was always natural. To the author of the First Gospel, therefore, this form was natural, as it was to Jesus himself. And there can be no doubt,

that the *form* of the utterances of Jesus the First Gospel reproduces more faithfully than the Fourth. Still, it is incredible that the Sermon on the Mount, or the prediction in the twenty-fourth chapter of the final troubles and of the coming of the Son of Man, should have been spoken straight off by Jesus just as they are given in the First Gospel. No sane critic will maintain that they were. In both passages the Evangelist has had a number of *logia* to place, and has given to them, as well as he could, a setting and connection in accordance with their subject-matter, and with the occasion to which he knew them generally to belong. But he, for the most part, gives them their setting and connection simply by juxtaposing them; whereas the editor of the Fourth Gospel, having to give this setting and connection to his *logia*, gives it by articulating them. Therefore he changes the look of the *logia* which he reports more than either of the three Synoptics changes it. He less faithfully reproduces the fashion in which each separate *logion* was originally said by Jesus.

Furthermore, the editor of the Fourth Gospel had to deal with a second harvest of *logia*, gathered from John after the first harvest of sayings had been reaped, and had made men eager for what might yet remain. The mass of the first harvest was sure to consist of the more simple and practical sayings of the Lord. In

the nature of things it was probable that this should be so; from the character of the first reporters it was certain that it would be so. There remained a number of *logia* somewhat profounder and more obscure, more over the heads of the disciples than the simple *logia*, and therefore less interesting to them. Of this kind were sayings in which Jesus spoke of his relation to the Father, and of life and death in the sense that he loved to give to those words. '*I came forth from the Father.—The Father sent me.—My doctrine is not mine, but his that sent me.—The Father is greater than I.—I can of mine own self do nothing.—The Son can of himself do nothing, but only what he seeth the Father doing.—He that hateth me hateth my Father also.—I and the Father are one.—He that believeth on me hath everlasting life.—If a man keep my word he shall never see death.—I am the resurrection and the life.*'[1]

That sayings of this kind were from the first known and reported is proved by our finding in the First Gospel such a *logion* as the following:— 'All things are delivered unto me by my Father, and no one knoweth the Son but the Father, neither knoweth any one the Father save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him.'[2] We need hardly say that here the

[1] John xvi. 27; xvii. 8, 18, 21, 23, 25; vii. 16; xiv. 28; v. 30; v. 19; xv. 23; x. 30; vi. 47; viii. 51; xi. 25.

[2] Matt. xi. 27.

Tübingen professors smell *Tendenz*, and affirm that a piece of Greek Gnosticism must have got thrust into the Gospel of the old Jewish Evangelist. But these solutions we do not permit to ourselves; and the *logion*, famous in the history of the criticism of the New Testament text, is given by two out of the three Synoptics,—by St. Luke[1] as well as by St. Matthew. We receive it, therefore, as giving clear proof of the existence of sayings of the Lord on that class of subjects which the *logia* of the Fourth Gospel touch so frequently, subjects such as the relation of Jesus to the Father, and the like. Indeed, we do not see how Jesus could have pursued his design of transforming the popular ideal of the Messiah, who was described by prophecy as the Son of God, without touching on such subjects. And it is in part to the prominence in the Fourth Gospel of sayings on them that the tradition points, when it so early distinguishes this as the *spiritual* Gospel.[2]

To the Greek editor of John's materials these *logia* naturally assumed a transcendent interest and importance. He was plainly a man, as we have said, of philosophical acquirements. True, religion was uppermost with him, not speculation. The tone of his prologue, though from Jesus such a performance is inconceivable, is profoundly religious, penetrated by the grace and

[1] Luke x. 22.

[2] πνευματικὸν εὐαγγέλιον. See Eusebius, *Hist. Eccles.* vi. 14.

truth of the religion of Jesus. Whoever compares it with what remains to us of the great Greek Gnostics, of Basileides or Valentinus, will feel that the difference between them and the writer of the Fourth Gospel lies here: that while they are above all men of speculative thought, he is above all a man of religion. Still, in this world of speculative thought he had lived, in this world of ceaseless questions, as Tertullian says: '*Unde malum et quare, et unde homo et quomodo, et unde Deus?*—whence and why is evil, and whence and how is man, and whence is God?' Such questions had in his eyes an infinite interest and importance: sayings of Jesus which bore upon them could not but rivet and fascinate his mind. In his redaction of John's materials we see that he cannot make too much of such *logia*. He returns to them again and again, and avails himself of every occasion for re-introducing them.

Well, then, to charge the gnomic form of his fundamental themes, the sayings of Jesus, and to connect these into an articulated and flowing discourse, was a rule, as we have seen, of our Evangelist's redaction, and of itself necessitated a considerable change in his primitive data. A yet further change was caused by affection for certain themes, leading him to present these themes again and again, slightly varied. Moreover, in his whole redaction, in

his presentment of sayings of Jesus as well as of incidents in his life, he laboured, in spite of his superiority to the Synoptics in literary skill and in philosophical thought, under one disadvantage. He had the disadvantage of a foreigner who presents manners, locutions, localities, not his own, but alien to him. He could not be warned by that instinct which perpetually, on points of detail, keeps a native straight, and makes him feel certain things to be improbable and impossible.

We have seen that the internal evidence, to be drawn from the Gospel itself, contradicts Baur's theory of the consummate artist, at the end of the second century, freely inventing it all. But the internal evidence suits very well with the supposition of a Greek Christian editing a second harvest, for which the materials were furnished by John, of sayings and doings of the Lord, arranging them in his own fashion, and giving to the *logia* an interdependence and connection which originally they had not; moreover, amplifying and repeating certain *logia*, and making developments from them. Now, the tradition gives us John, in Asia, supplying the materials of this second harvest, but not himself editing them. If another edited them in Asia, for the benefit of the Asiatic Churches, this other was surely a Greek Christian; and if a Greek Christian edited them, he was likely to proceed in the way

alleged, and of which the Gospel bears, surely, strong marks.

For according to all the rules, we will not say of criticism, but of common sense,—according to all rules of probability, and of speakers speaking in character, and not violently and unaccountably deserting it,—can anything be more incredible than that Jesus should have actually spoken to Nicodemus, or John the Baptist to a disciple, the latter part of the speeches attributed to them in the third chapter of our Gospel? Let us take first the speech to Nicodemus. It is probable that the real end of the dialogue is to be found in the tenth verse: 'Art thou Israel's teacher, and knowest not these things?' But our Evangelist had two other *logia* of Jesus: 'We speak that we do know, and testify that we have seen, and ye receive not our testimony';[1] and, 'If I tell you earthly things and ye believe not, how shall ye believe if I tell you heavenly things?'[2] which admitted of being placed in this connection. So here he places them. This, we say, is probable; but what is certain is, that Jesus did not speak the verse which follows these two *logia*, the thirteenth: 'And no man hath ascended up into heaven save he that came down from heaven, the Son of Man.' That is a variation on a primitive theme of Jesus, *I am the bread that came down from Heaven*,[3] inserted

[1] John iii. 11. [2] John iii. 12. [3] John vi. 41.

here by our theological lecturer, because he knew it was a theme dwelt upon by Jesus and thought that he saw here a natural place for it. A genuine *logion* of Jesus follows, bearing every mark of being still quite or almost in its original form, but woven into this context by our lecturer, and owing its connection with what precedes simply to his conjunction *and:* 'As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whosoever believeth on him may have everlasting life.' Then enters the theological lecturer, and continues (one may almost say) lecturing in his own proper person till the end of the speech, from the sixteenth verse to the twenty-first. For who, that has studied the sayings of Jesus well, can ever believe that Jesus said: 'For God so loved the world that he gave his only-begotten Son, to the end that whosoever believeth in him should have everlasting life,'[1] and the rest? Our Evangelist does not, however, in these verses, think he is inventing; for he is going all the time upon three primitive themes of Jesus: *He that believeth on me hath everlasting life; I came not to judge the world, but to save the world; I am come a light into the world, that whosoever believeth on me should not abide in darkness.*[2] On these genuine *logia* he is going, and he merely amplifies and repeats them; developing them,

[1] The text of the Vatican manuscript is followed.
[2] John xii. 47; vi. 47; xii. 46.

in his own judgment, naturally, and as it was to be supposed Jesus himself did.

Let us now pass to the speech of John the Baptist, at the end of the same chapter. The real sayings assigned to John the Baptist by our Evangelist's tradition ended, one can hardly doubt, with the words: 'He must increase, but I must decrease.'[1] The rest, down to the end of the thirty-sixth verse, is our theological lecturer. That criticism only which sees no impossibility in Jesus having spoken the sixteenth verse of this chapter will see no impossibility in John the Baptist's having spoken the thirty-sixth. But again our Evangelist is not inventing, but developing. He has certain genuine *logia* of Jesus as his basis, the chief of them being that which we have already quoted: 'He that believeth on me hath everlasting life.'[2] He has these *logia* with several variations of phrase, indicating that they were used more than once, in more connections than one, perhaps by more than one speaker. The speech of John the Baptist seems to him a connection eminently proper for them. The Baptist's real words appear to him to imply their adoption and addition; it appears to him natural and certain

[1] John iii. 30.

[2] John vi. 47. The true sense is given by Jesus in a *logion* quoted v. 24; but the theme itself, in its most concise and authentic form, is probably the verse at vi. 47, in the reading of the Vatican manuscript, which omits *on me*, and has simply, ὁ πιστεύων ἔχει ζωὴν αἰώνιον

that the Baptist adopted and added them. So we come to have John the Baptist saying: 'He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life; but he that believeth not the Son hath not life, but the wrath of God abideth on him.'[1]

All that is said of 'the dogmatic mysticism, and artificial, prolix discourses' of the Fourth Gospel, all the complaints of its substituting 'for the sublime and pregnant discourses of the Sea of Galilee and the Mount of Olives the arid mysticism of the schools of Alexandria,' will be found, we think, so far as they are just, to be best met by the supposition of a Greek editor connecting, repeating, and amplifying themes of Jesus; not by the supposition of a consummate artist inventing the whole Gospel. The kernel of the work, the fundamental themes of Jesus, we maintain to be no 'arid mysticism' at all, but to be in profound unison with 'the sublime and pregnant discourses of the Sea of Galilee and the Mount of Olives.' And we do not see who was capable of uttering them but Jesus. Unless our Evangelist invented them, we do not see from whom he can have got them, except from Jesus; and, indeed, it is not even contended that he got them from any one else. But it is contended, in defiance of all the tradition, that he himself invented them. But to us it seems incredible, even on grounds of literary criticism solely, that the man who was such a consummate

[1] John iii. 36.

artist as to invent for Jesus the first part of his conversation with Nicodemus should have followed it up by the second. It seems incredible, again, that a dramatic genius capable of inventing for John the Baptist: 'He that hath the bride is the bridegroom, but the friend of the bridegroom, who standeth and heareth him, rejoiceth greatly because of the bridegroom's voice; this my joy therefore is fulfilled,'[1]—it seems incredible that such a genius should have finished the Baptist's speech by making him say: 'He that believeth not the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him.'[2] And the question, whether this is incredible or no, we would cheerfully consent to submit to the judgment of any competent tribunal; only the judges constituting the tribunal ought not to be the professors of the theological faculties of Germany, but Germans like Lessing, Herder, and Goethe.

It is certain that what is theological lecture in the speeches of Jesus comes not from him but from his editor. But a treasure of *logia* remains, which have all the characters of genuine sayings of Jesus, and which are invaluable as indicating the line really taken by him. The *bread of life*, the *true vine*, the *good shepherd*, the *light of the world*, are all of them images from the Old Testament, such as the hearers of Jesus were familiar with and gladly heard, such as philosophers like Philo

[1] John iii. 29. [2] John iii. 36.

were at that time copiously employing for their allegorical theology, such as Jesus himself loved naturally and used instinctively, and such as he could and did make admirably helpful to his main design. That design was, it cannot be too often repeated, to change the popular Messias-ideal; and what stroke towards such an end could be at once more happy and more characteristic of Jesus than when, for example, calling himself *the light of the world*,[1] he in a moment identified for his followers his ideal of mildness and self-renouncement with the famous world-light of Messianic prophecy: 'It is a small thing that thou shouldest be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved of Israel: I will also give thee for *a light of the Gentiles, that my salvation may be unto the ends of the earth*'?[2] Strokes like these belong essentially to Jesus, and it is an unsound criticism which can think of assigning them to our theological lecturer.

Many, too, of the objections brought against *logia* of the Fourth Gospel are frivolous, and merely show the bringer's want of imagination. It is objected that Jesus cannot have said: 'As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so shall the Son of Man be lifted up,'[3] because he could not have foreseen the manner of his own death. But he fixed on the most miserable kind of death as his fitting and sure climax; and Plato,

[1] John viii. 12. [2] Isaiah xlix. 6. [3] John iii. 14.

following up a supposed sufferer to his climax of misery, fixes, we shall find, upon the very same: —'Finally,' says he, 'we will suppose him *crucified*.'[1] It is objected that Jesus cannot have said to his disciples things like: *He that eateth me shall live by me*,[2] because the disciples were certain to misunderstand them, and he would not have said things they must misunderstand. This is a most extraordinary objection. One can account for it only by the strong reluctance of mankind to recognise the gulf between every great spirit and themselves. To this day, whoever reads a controversy about the Real Presence, will find Christians,—and learned Christians,—misapprehending the words of Jesus about eating him, even after he himself has supplied the plain explanation of them,[3] as totally as did the Jews; will find the Christian theologians stumbling and fumbling, just like the Jewish theologians, in their gross, dark, narrow materialism. Half of what any great spirit says is sure to be misapprehended by his hearers; much more than half of what Jesus said was sure to be misapprehended by his disciples. If he talked to them at all, he could not but talk to them as he did. And if he talked to them as he did, taking their language about God, the Messiah, bread from heaven, life and death, and translating it into that of his higher ideal, they could not but misunderstand him.

[1] Plato, *Gorgias*, cap. xxviii. [2] John vi. 57. [3] John vi. 63.

Yet he could not but talk to them, and they could not but reap some benefit from it. What Christianity has done up to this time is the measure of the benefit which Jesus, even imperfectly apprehended, could produce; and that benefit has been something immense. But such are the necessary conditions on which a great spirit speaks to those who hear his word. They understand him imperfectly; nevertheless, they appropriate what they can of him, and get helped along by it somehow.

Let us look closer at the very *logion*, the famous *logion*, last quoted, and observe how in itself it is an entirely probable saying of Jesus, and how its improbability all comes from its editor's treatment of it. The *logion* is exactly what we call a primitive theme, a nucleus. Our Evangelist composed, of course, his sixth chapter with the institution of the Last Supper full in his view, and with the words, *This is my body*, *This is my blood*, ever present to his thoughts. But he had anterior incidents and words to go upon. He had a story from John, how the Jews, with the multitude's faith in miracles and desire to get them worked for its benefit, had required Jesus, as the alleged 'prophet like unto Moses,' to feed them miraculously as Moses did. Was it not written in the Scriptures: 'He gave them bread from heaven to eat'?[1] Our Evangelist, we say, had a tradition from John of sayings and answers

[1] Ps. lxxviii. 24.

which this demand of the Jews had called forth. Jesus had said: 'Labour not for the meat that perisheth, but for the meat that endureth unto everlasting life.'[1] He had said: 'Not Moses gave you the bread from heaven, but my Father giveth you the true bread from heaven.'[2] 'Give us then this bread,'[3] was the Jews' rejoinder. Jesus had answered: 'He that believeth hath everlasting life; he that heareth my word, and believeth him that sent me, hath everlasting life. I am the bread of life! I am the bread that came down from heaven! He that cometh to me shall never hunger, and he that believeth on me shall never thirst! Not as your fathers did eat manna in the wilderness and are dead; he that eateth this bread shall live for ever.'[4] The Jews, with their keen sensuousness, were familiar with the image of God's word as something to feed on, something good to eat and pleasant to taste. It is written in the Psalms: 'How sweet are thy words unto my taste, yea, sweeter than honey unto my mouth!'[5] But they exclaimed, when Jesus called himself the bread from heaven: 'Is not this Jesus the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? how saith he that *I am come down from heaven?* how can he give us his flesh to eat?'[6] Then Jesus had answered: 'As the living Father sent me, and I live by the

[1] John vi. 27. [2] John vi. 32. [3] John vi. 34.
[4] John vi. 41, 47 (compare v. 24), 48, 58, and 49.
[5] Ps. cxix. 103. [6] John vi. 42, 52.

Father, so he that eateth me, he also shall live by me.'[1]

These we may take as the primitive themes out of which our Evangelist's sixth chapter is built up. Other genuine *logia* are worked into it. But they are worked into it; they are not its essential elements. Most probably, too, the primitive themes were several times reiterated by Jesus, not without some variation. But we shall hardly err if we take the primitive themes above given, as our nearest possible approach to what Jesus and his interlocutors did actually say. And this substratum being committed to our combining and amplifying Greek editor, how natural and explicable becomes the apparition, in the chapter, of those sayings which now stagger every serious critic! It is almost inconceivable, if one thinks of it, that Jesus should have actually said in the conversation in question: 'Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, ye have no life in yourselves; he that eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood hath everlasting life, and I will raise him up in the last day; for my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed.'[2] But it is perfectly conceivable that he should have said, the image of the bread from heaven being once started: '*I am the bread of life! he that eateth me shall live by me!*'[3] and that our editor being such a man as

[1] John vi. 57. [2] John vi. 53-55.
[3] John vi. 48, 57. For the current conception of the word of

we suppose, and having the words of institution of the Last Supper swaying his mind, should by his mode of combining, reiterating and developing these primitive themes, when he had them to place, have turned them into such speeches of Jesus as now puzzle us.

For, again, it is almost inconceivable that Jesus should have really said: 'For the bread of God is he *that cometh down from heaven*, and that giveth life unto the world'; or that he should have said: '*I am come down from heaven*, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me.'[1] But it is entirely natural that our editor, having such primitive themes of Jesus as: 'I am the bread that came down from heaven! I am the bread of life! I came not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me!'[2] should have combined them and developed them in the way he does. It is almost inconceivable that after saying, 'It is written in the prophets: *And they shall be all taught of God!* Every one that heareth and learneth from the Father cometh unto me,'—Jesus should have subjoined the remark: 'Not

God as a bread of life, see Jesus himself quoting Deuteronomy (viii. 3) in Matt. iv. 4: 'Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God'; and see, too, Philo, in his *Sacrarum Legum Allegoriæ* (Mangey's edit. vol. i. p. 120): ὁρᾷς τῆς ψυχῆς τροφὴν οἵα ἐστίν; λόγος θεοῦ συνεχής, ἐοικὼς δρόσῳ, κ.τ.λ. Only it is to be observed, in general, that while an allegorising theologian, such as Philo, uses images of this kind like a pedant, Jesus uses them like a poet.

[1] John vi. 33, 38. [2] John vi. 41, 48, 38.

that any man hath seen the Father, save he who is from God; he hath seen the Father.'[1] An addition of this kind is inconceivable from Jesus, because both the matter and the manner of it are the clean opposite of his. But it was in entire conformity with our theological lecturer's notion and style, after giving the genuine *logia* of Jesus, to complete and guard the sense of them, as he fancied, by the amplifying clauses.

VI

We might go through the Fourth Gospel chapter by chapter, and endeavour to assign to each and all of the *logia* in it their right character, —to determine what in them is probably Jesus, and what is the combining, repeating, and expanding Greek editor. But this would be foreign to our object. We seek, not to produce a complete work of ingenious criticism on the Bible, or on any one document in it, but to help readers, sick of popular and conventional theology, and resolved to take the Bible for nothing but what it really is,—to help such readers to see what the Bible really is, and how very much, seen as it really is, it concerns them. So we sought to show that the Old Testament is really a majestic homage to the grandeur of righteousness, or conduct, and a sublime witness to its necessity;

[1] John vi. 45, 46.

while the New Testament, again, is really an incomparable elucidation by Jesus Christ of what righteousness in fact and in truth is. And there can be no question that books of which this is the real character do concern men vitally. So, again, we seek to show that of Jesus Christ's incomparable elucidation of what righteousness is, several main elements are really to be found in the Fourth Gospel. In that case it urgently concerns people to study the Fourth Gospel, instead of tossing it aside as a Gnostic forgery, crammed with 'the arid mysticism of the schools of Alexandria.' But to lead men to study it, and to clear out of their way objections which might for ever prevent their studying it, is our aim; when we have accomplished this, we have accomplished as much as we intend.

But to restore perfectly the Jesus of the Fourth Gospel, or indeed of any Gospel, is impossible. The data are insufficient, and the alteration, often important though perhaps verbally slight, which his sayings have undergone from the pressure of other minds upon them, is too considerable. Our restoration must frequently be conjectural, and we may be wrong in our conjectures. We do not pretend that we could establish as clear and certain our criticism of every passage, or nearly every passage, in the Fourth Gospel, supposing we were to go through it with our reader. And even if we could save him from one or two mistakes by not merely

giving him the guiding ideas with which to read the Gospel for himself, but by going through it with him, our object is not to make as faultless a critic of him as possible, but to keep him in contact with a book which will do him good, and to make him study it for himself. If he thinks it spurious, he is not likely to study it; but we try to show him that it is full of genuine things, and to give him the guiding ideas by which to account for the things that made the charge of spuriousness seem plausible, and by which to extricate the things that are genuine.

Nor let this be esteemed a slight assistance, or the abandoning him to uncertainty. What is uncertain, what a reader may frequently not determine right, and what we might not determine right if we came to help him, is the occasion on which each particular saying was uttered and the connection to which it belongs. But the main doubt as to the Gospel's genuineness arose from the occasion assigned and the connection given by our *Evangelist* to his stock of 'Sayings of the Lord.' Now, we show that his circumstances and literary procedure were such that the occasion and connection imposed by him on his *logia* are not to be trusted. We may be tempted to try and restore the right occasion and connection, and in this work there must necessarily be some uncertainty. But if we stop quite short of this, if we simply set

aside our Evangelist's combinations as untrustworthy, then we leave to the *logia* of Jesus in the Fourth Gospel,—those of them which are not manifestly theological developments and exercitations by our lecturer,—the character of maxim-like, isolated sayings, complete in themselves. Now, the teaching of Jesus, as of the nation and race to which he belonged, really had in general this character. His deliverances were 'concise utterances touching the things of concernment to the truth.' And for practical use among Christians it is in this way,—as maxims, detached sayings,—that they are in fact generally employed; and it is when they are employed in this way that their practical usefulness is greatest. As single sayings the mind ruminates them, turns them over and over, feeds upon them. For a critical curiosity, then, we may not yet have done enough, when we have established that instead of taking the sayings of Jesus in that connection wherein the Fourth Gospel places them, it is far safer to take them as detached sayings. But for the practical use of the contents of the Fourth Gospel we have by this means done very much.

Jesus, no doubt, did not in his discourse deliver sentences articulated in the Greek fashion one to another. He delivered sentences juxtaposed in the Semitic fashion one to another. Because in the Fourth Gospel his sentences are articulated in the Greek fashion, those sentences

have been confidently pronounced not to be sayings of Jesus. But the *logion* of Jesus is there; and often, in order to get at it, we have only to drop the Greek editor's conjunctions. For instance; suppose we take the sayings which form the speech of Jesus at the end of the twelfth chapter, from the forty-fourth verse to the fiftieth. As a connected speech Jesus did not deliver those sayings; our Evangelist has made them into one speech for him. But drop the conjunctions and the connecting clauses, and there is not a *logion* there to offend, singly, even a jealous criticism; there is not one which does not show the characteristic and satisfying mark of Jesus.

Our great point, then, as to the Fourth Gospel is this: the Evangelist is a combiner, not an inventor. It is his forms of connecting and articulating which obscure the gnomic character of the sayings of the Lord in this Gospel; get rid of those forms, and the gnomic and genuine character reappears. Our Evangelist had a number of *logia* to plant. He did not, he could not, know their true connection; and the connection he imposes on them is not to be depended upon. Often we, studying quietly his work as it lies before us complete, can perceive a better connection for certain *logia* than that which he has devised for them. Almost certainly, the last half of the fourteenth verse and the first half of the fifteenth, in the tenth chapter,

have their right place not where we now read them but in the twenty-seventh verse of the same chapter. The twenty-seventh verse should run: 'My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they know me, as the Father knoweth me, and I know the Father; and they follow me.' The thirtieth verse of the same chapter ('I and the Father are one') has almost certainly its right place, not where it stands, but side by side with the *logion* in the fourteenth chapter, 'He that hath seen me hath seen the Father,'[1] and in a similar connection. Almost certainly the fourteenth verse of the twentieth chapter, 'He that receiveth whomsoever I send receiveth me, and he that receiveth me receiveth him that sent me,' is misplaced where it stands, and should go with the sixteenth verse of the fifteenth chapter, the eighteenth verse of the seventeenth, and the twenty-first of the twentieth,[2] and in a similar connection. Almost certainly the four verses from the twenty-second to the twenty-fifth, in the fifteenth chapter, belong to a connection such as that in the eighth chapter, were said to the Jews not to the Apostles, and are a mere unseasonable repetition, put by our Evangelist into the mouth of Jesus speaking to his disciples, of things which he had previously

[1] John xiv. 9.

[2] 'I have appointed you that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain.' 'As Thou sentest me into the world, so send I them into the world.' 'As my Father hath sent me, even so send I you.'

said to the Jews. But we can never be absolutely sure of finding the real original connection for any *logion* of this kind; the safe thing is to distrust our Evangelist's connection, and to take the *logia* singly. Even where they have a dramatic propriety and beauty as joined together by our Evangelist, it is often very questionable whether Jesus thus joined them, whether we are not more on the trace of Jesus when we take them singly. Nothing can well be finer or more impressive than the speech formed by the series of *logia*[1] attributed to Jesus after Andrew tells him of the Greeks desiring to see him. But it is highly improbable that Jesus did actually thus deliver these *logia* as a series, and in one speech, and on one occasion; although we may grant every *logion* in the series to be in itself authentic, and of the very highest value.

Now, it is wonderful how the likelihood of our having as the substance of the Fourth Gospel genuine sayings of Jesus will be found to gain, and the unlikelihood of it to dwindle, the moment we come to disregard our Evangelist's combinations, and to suppress his repetitions and lecturings. Let us take the series of chapters against which so much of objection has been brought, the series from the twelfth chapter to the end of the seventeenth. They form almost one continuous speech, and most certainly they were not spoken as such. They

[1] John xii. 23-26.

contain, also, repetitions which Jesus, to judge from everything that we know of his manner, cannot have made, and some things which he cannot have said at all. It is easy to see this, and to reject the whole series of chapters as unauthentic. But a little attention will show us a number of primitive themes, or *nuclei*, on which our Evangelist is operating; and that these themes,—to judge, again, from everything that we know of the manner of Jesus,—have all the marks of being authentic. And we may with profit try to get back to what Jesus can have actually said; only we must be careful, in attempting this, to distinguish between what is certain, and what can only be called probable.

For example. The governing word of our series of chapters is certainly the word *ὑπάγω*, *I go away*. And the chapters have their reason for existence, certainly, in a development by Jesus of this governing word. And that development is: *συμφέρει ἵνα ἀπέλθω*,[1]—*It is expedient that I depart*. And the form of this development is certainly twofold at least: *συμφέρει ἐμοί, συμφέρει ὑμῖν*,—*It is expedient for me, It is expedient for you*. It is expedient for *me*, because I go to the Father.[2] It is expedient for *you*, because the Paraclete's coming to you depends on my going from you.[3] This, we say, seems certain. And to us it seems probable that there is also a third development given by Jesus to his *I go away*;

[1] John xvi. 7. [2] John xiv. 28. [3] John xvi. 7.

and that this development is: *συμφέρει τῷ κόσμῳ*, —*It is expedient for the world.* We find this third development in the words of Jesus: 'Ye shall weep and lament, but the world shall rejoice; ye shall be sorrowful, but your sorrow shall be turned into joy. A woman when she is in travail hath sorrow, because her hour is come; but as soon as she is delivered of the child she remembereth no more her anguish, for joy that a man is born into the world.'[1] Combined as our Evangelist combines them, these words appear to mean, no doubt, that the world, the wicked world, shall exult in the sufferings and death of Jesus; and so the commentators take them. But we cannot help thinking, that, as Jesus spoke them, they were words to be classed with the texts: 'I am come a light into the world, that whoso believeth on me should not abide in darkness'; 'A light to lighten the Gentiles'; 'One flock, one shepherd.'[2] We believe that they really mean, not, *The world shall exult at my death*, but, *My death is good for the world as well as for you and me;* and that they are a third and admirable development given to the ground-motive of our chapters, *ὑπάγω*. This we believe; and perhaps if we were in a professor's chair at Tübingen, we should say that we could and did demonstrate it. But being what we are, we say that it is not demonstrable, indeed, nor yet with such

[1] John xvi. 20, 21. [2] John xii. 46; Luke ii. 32; John x. 16.

overwhelming probability in its favour as to seem certain ;—the evidence is not such as to admit of its being either the one or the other. But we say that it is probable ; and that it has so much to recommend it that we ourselves believe it.

That Jesus, however, uttered a great deal of what is attributed to him in the series of chapters from the twelfth to the seventeenth, that he gave the primitive themes which are the basis of them, that the combination of the themes is the Evangelist's, and that by the Evangelist Jesus is made to repeat himself over and over again, to connect things as he never connected them, and to say things which he never said, we regard as so probable that it becomes certain. For the primitive themes are in the characteristic manner of Jesus, and we do not see from whom else they can have proceeded. The combination, repetition, and development of the themes are in the characteristic manner of the Evangelist.

The governing word of the chapters under review has been just now mentioned. In a former part of our argument, we had occasion to single out one or two of their primitive themes. Besides these, which we showed to be the nucleus of sayings delivering Jesus Christ's own real doctrine about his own resurrection, there is the parable of the heavenly house with its many mansions, a parable which is the Evangelist's authentic nucleus for unauthentic

combinations and developments favourable to the popular doctrine of the resurrection.[1] There is the parable of the vine and the branches, illustrating that primitive theme of Jesus: *Abide in me and I in you.*[2] There are the new commandment; the promise of the Paraclete; the promise that the disciples' requests should be heard; the exhortation not to fear the world's hatred; the prayer for the disciples; the sayings of Jesus about his glory; the sayings about his relation to the Father. All of these have their primitive theme or themes; all of them are connected, introduced and reintroduced, and more or less developed by our Evangelist. Now, if the reader simply takes all the sayings belonging to each theme, and puts them together, he will do what is very conducive both to a right enjoyment of this series of chapters, and to a right criticism of them. On the one hand, he will bring out the beauty and significance of the genuine sayings of Jesus; on the other, he will bring out how much is evidently repetition, serving to introduce our Evangelist's developments. We should like our reader to distribute under the heads or themes indicated all the sayings for each theme, and then to judge them for himself. We will, however, taking one or two themes not hitherto touched by us, show him at least how true it

[1] John xiv. 2, 3; compared with xvi. 22, and xvii. 24.
[2] John xv. 4.

is that by the process we recommend both objects are served: the right enjoyment of our Evangelist's materials, and the right criticism of them.

First, as to the enjoyment of what our Evangelist has, in these chapters, saved for us. We will simply put together the scattered *logia* about the new commandment, making the subject begin where it naturally does begin, with the sayings of Jesus after he has washed the disciples' feet at the Last Supper. 'Know ye what I have done unto you? Ye call me Master and Lord, and ye say well, for so I am. If I then, your Master and Lord, have washed your feet, ye also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example that ye also should do as I have done to you. Verily I say unto you, the servant is not greater than his lord, neither is he that is sent greater than he that sent him. A new commandment give I unto you, that ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. Hereby shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another. This is my commandment, that ye love one another as I have loved you. Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends. Ye are my friends, if ye do that which I command you. Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you. Henceforth I call you not servants, for the servant knoweth not what his

lord doeth; but I have called you friends, for all things that I hear of my Father I make known unto you. These things I command you, that ye love one another.'[1] All these sentences we may take as genuine *logia*. Relieved from the separation which the Evangelist, for the purposes of his long discourse and its developments, inflicts on them, simply put together again as by their subject they belong together, how their effectiveness and impressiveness increases, how heightened is our enjoyment of them!

And next, as to the right criticism of our Evangelist's mode of procedure. Let us take another theme, the primitive theme for all which is said about the disciples' requests being granted, the words: 'Whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, I will do it.'[2] Let us put with these words all the scattered repetitions of this same theme, some of them with a little variation, others in words almost identical with the *logion* we have quoted. When we see them all together, we see that by all the repetitions nothing is really added, either in the substance or in the form of expression, to the primitive theme;—nothing is gained. The primitive theme, then, alone is from Jesus. The repetitions are our Evangelist's, to enable Jesus to make a long, connected speech, such as Jesus

[1] John xiii. 12-16, 34, 35; xv. 12-17.
[2] John xiv. 13.

never dealt in, such as is quite alien to his manner. Now, it is argued that the *logia* proper to the Fourth Gospel are all of them inventions, because they are unmeaningly and vainly repeated. But is the ineffective repetition, several times, of a *logion*, any reason why Jesus should not have given it with effect once?

The same with the sayings of Jesus about his glory. It is argued that the frequent and earnest insistence on his glory, particularly in the long prayer of the seventeenth chapter, is not at all in the style of Jesus and cannot be his. As the Evangelist presents and develops it, we will own it cannot. But let us put together all the sayings of Jesus about his glory, going back for this purpose as far even as the eleventh chapter, where is the first apparition of them, and we shall be able to see, both what Jesus may probably have said on the subject, and how the Evangelist has probably dealt with it. First of all, we find a primitive theme entirely in the style of Jesus, in his exclamation when he heard from Andrew and Philip of the Gentiles, or, as our Evangelist calls them, the Greeks, present at the last Passover that he kept and desirous to see him: 'The hour is come that the Son of Man should be glorified!'[1] In all the Four Gospels there is not a saying of Jesus more safe to accept than this, more perfectly in character. To Jesus, these foreigners

[1] John xii. 23.

desiring to see him were the Gentiles, the nations. The Messiah, of whom the Jews had their minds full, he steadfastly identified, we know, with the mild and stricken Servant of prophecy, 'his visage so marred more than any man, and his form more than the sons of men,'[1] and himself with this Messiah. He knew that the victory of this Messiah and of his cause could only come when he had 'poured out his soul unto death.'[2] What was that victory? It was the foundation, and henceforth unconquerable institution for the world at large, of the kingdom of God, the reign of righteousness. 'The Eternal will cause righteousness and praise to spring forth before all nations; I will set my glory among the heathen; from the rising of the sun even unto the going down of the same my name shall be great among the Gentiles.'[3] But to bring in the reign of righteousness, was to bring in the Eternal's glory; and the Servant who brought in this, founded his own by doing so. We may conceive of many and various texts as contributing here. Texts originally proper to the despised Servant, the Messias-ideal of Jesus: 'So shall many nations exult in him; kings shall shut their mouth before him.'[4] Texts originally proper to the renewed Israel: 'The Gentiles shall see thy righteousness, and

[1] Isaiah lii. 14. [2] Isaiah liii. 12.
[3] Isaiah lxi. 11; Ezekiel xxxix. 21; Malachi i. 11.
[4] Isaiah lii. 15.

all kings thy glory.'[1] Texts originally proper to the righteous man in general: 'Thou shalt guide me with thy counsel, and afterwards receive me to glory.'[2] Texts originally proper to the conquering Root of David, the Messias-ideal of the Jews: 'His rest shall be glory.'[3] All these we may conceive as present and contributory in the mind of Jesus, when, seeing his death imminent, and hearing at the same time of the strangers desirous to see him, he said: 'The hour is come that the Son of Man should be glorified!'

But once this primitive theme given, how natural that our Evangelist should harp upon it, recur to it, develop it! The whole seventeenth chapter may be called a development of this theme, and of one other: *That they may be one as we are one!*[4] It is as much in character for a disciple to love to prolong the theme of Christ's glory and dilate upon it, as it is little in character for Jesus himself to do so. And the mode of development followed is just the mode tempting to a disciple,—Jew or Greek,—of Jesus, but never adopted or encouraged by Jesus himself.

Jesus checked questions of theosophy. He contented himself with taking the conception of God as the Jews had it, and as the Old Testament delivered it, as the eternal and righteous

[1] Isaiah lxii. 2. [2] Psalm lxxiii. 24. [3] Isaiah xi. 10.
[4] ἵνα ὦσιν ἓν καθὼς ἡμεῖς. See John xvii. 11, 21-23.

Father; and with saying of himself: 'I came forth from God,' 'God sent me.' But questions of theosophy had and have, as we see by the history of Gnosticism, and, indeed, by the whole history of religion, an irresistible attraction for the human mind. Men asked themselves, as Tertullian says, *Unde Deus?*—and they loved to inquire, in like manner, precisely how was Jesus related to his Father who sent him. In a famous passage in the Book of Proverbs, Wisdom says of herself: 'The Lord possessed me in the beginning of his way before his works of old; I was set up from everlasting. I was by him as one brought up with him, and I was daily his delight.'[1] The Book of Wisdom, a late work, but for that very reason more likely to be popular, and of which in the Epistle to the Hebrews we can see the influence, added these striking traits: 'Wisdom is the breath of the power of God, and a pure influence flowing from the glory of the Almighty. She is the brightness of the everlasting light, the unspotted mirror of the power of God, and the image of his goodness.'[2] Eagerly did theosophy possess itself of these images, and spin its fancies by the help of two supposed personages, *Sophia* and *Logos*, the Wisdom and Word of God. Jesus

[1] Prov. viii. 22, 23, 30.

[2] Wisdom vii. 25, 26. Compare *ἀπαύγασμα φωτὸς ἀϊδίου . . . καὶ εἰκὼν τῆς ἀγαθότητος αὐτοῦ*, in this passage, with Heb. i. 3: *ἀπαύγασμα τῆς δόξης καὶ χαρακτὴρ τῆς ὑποστάσεως αὐτοῦ*.

spoke of himself as uttering the word of God; but that he called himself the *Logos*, there is neither indication nor probability. There is, however, some trace of his calling himself the *wisdom* of God. At least, a saying of the First Gospel, 'Wherefore, behold, *I* send unto you prophets and wise men and scribes,'[1] is given in the Third Gospel in the following different and remarkable form: 'Wherefore also *the wisdom of God* said, I will send unto them prophets and apostles.'[2] It is possible that we have here a trace of Jesus having really and naturally, on at least one occasion, called himself 'the wisdom of God,' and having to that extent seemed to give countenance to the personifying lucubrations upon these terms *Sophia* and *Logos*,—the Wisdom, Reason, or Word, of God,—of both Jewish and Greek theosophy. It is possible; possible that our Evangelist, in developing what Jesus said of his glory, had thus much to go upon,[3] as well as *logia* like 'Before Abraham was, I am,' and 'I and the Father are one.'[4] At any rate, the glory of Jesus was made to accord with that of the *Sophia* or *Logos* of theosophical speculation, and with the attributes

[1] Matt. xx. 34. [2] Luke xi. 49.

[3] Perhaps, however, Jesus was simply referring to a well-known phrase of prophecy: 'I have sent unto you all my servants the prophets, rising up early and sending them; but ye have not inclined your ear nor hearkened unto me' (see Jeremiah xxxv. 15), and did not mean either *the Wisdom of God* or the *I* to stand for himself. [4] John viii. 58, and x. 30.

assigned to them by Scripture. And so we have Jesus made to say: 'And now, Father, glorify thou me beside thine own self with the glory which I had beside thee before the world was.'[1] We have him saying: 'Father, that which thou hast given me, I will that they also be with me where I am, that they may see my glory which thou gavest me because thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world.'[2] These things are not at all in the manner of Jesus. Jesus, as we have said, never theosophised. Not thus did he employ Scripture, not thus did he establish his divinity, not thus did he conceive his glory. But it is entirely in the manner of our Evangelist. And this is the good of putting together everything which relates to a primitive theme; because we then are enabled to perceive clearly, both how simple and characteristic was the original nucleus given by Jesus, and also how naturally the additions to it which perplex us may have arisen from the manipulation by the Evangelist of this given nucleus, from his expansions and developments of it.

VII

The seventeenth chapter is one where these expansions and developments appear to exceed considerably in amount the original nucleus.

[1] John xvii. 5.

[2] John xvii. 24. The Vatican manuscript is followed.

This is by no means always the case in our Evangelist's report of the sayings of Jesus. But in his report of miracles, and indeed in all reports of miracles, we may safely take it that the additions exceed the original nucleus of fact very largely. We said in our first chapter, that the suspension or diminution of hunger, when the attention is absorbed and the interest excited, was quite basis enough for the story of the miraculous feeding of the thousands. The answer has positively been hazarded, that no absorption or excitement could enable five thousand people to satisfy themselves upon five loaves and two fishes, and to leave twelve baskets full of fragments. As if the details of a miraculous story had the sort of solidity which would warrant one in thus gravely arguing upon them! as if any one who has come to distrust miracles trusts all the circumstances related for them and only distrusts the final result! It is in the circumstances that the legend consists, that the creative power of the imagination shows itself active. Granted that a starting-point and a hint of fact for the miracles related in our Gospels there has nearly always been, yet in nine cases out of ten we shall probably err if we imagine we can now seize even this hint of fact; it was so slight in the first instance, and has been so buried under the additions.

We have already remarked how perhaps the sole nucleus of solid fact for the miraculous

incidents at Christ's baptism was that weird light on Jordan mentioned in the Apocryphal Gospels. Sometimes the nucleus for a miracle was afforded, not improbably, by some saying of Jesus. Perhaps this is the true way of accounting for the miracle of the raising of Lazarus. The miracle of the raising of Lazarus has been the theme of endless disquisition; every detail of it has been canvassed with elaborate minuteness. What part of the details is solid we shall never know. But it may safely be said, that, the human mind being what it is and stories of miracle arising as they do, the juxtaposition of one or two sayings of Jesus is sufficient, to an investigator willing to look at things simply, to account for the whole miracle. Let us try to effect this juxtaposition.

The crowning moment in the career of Jesus, as Jesus himself construed and connected his own career, had arrived,—the moment for 'the Messiah to suffer and to enter into his glory.'[1] *The hour is come that the Son of Man should be glorified!*[2] At this moment Jesus is told of the death of a faithful disciple and friend. He says to his followers: *Our friend Lazarus sleepeth; I go to awake him.*[3] To the eye of Jesus, the kingdom of God, the reign of the saints, the introduction and triumph of everlasting righteousness,—that triumph in which re-live all the saints

[1] Luke xxiv. 26. [2] John xii. 23; comp. xi. 4.
[3] John xi. 11.

who are dead, and the saints who are yet alive live for evermore,—was at that moment beginning. The sisters of the departed are plunged in weeping and lamentation; Jesus says to Martha: *Thy brother shall rise again.*[1] Not with the bodily resurrection which Martha and the popular religion of Palestine then expected, and which the popular religion of Christendom expects now;—this materialism Jesus had to transform, as he had to transform the materialism of the Messias-ideal. Martha, however, imagines that Jesus is speaking of the resurrection in the sense of popular religion; but Jesus corrects her. He corrected her; but his correction was a gleam of light destined slowly to deepen, not of force at that time to pierce the darkness. His words were: *I am the resurrection and the life; he who believeth on me, though he die, shall live, and he who liveth and believeth on me shall never die.*[2] Out of that very *logion* which thus points to a wholly new ideal of resurrection,—out of that *logion*, passed from hearer to hearer, repeated, brooded over, misapprehended,—grew up, not improbably, the story of the great miracle of resurrection according to the old ideal,—the miracle of the raising of Lazarus. That *logion*, with the saying to Martha, *Thy brother shall rise again;* with the saying to the disciples, *Our friend Lazarus sleepeth, I go to awake him;* with some saying of Jesus about his glory, such as, *The*

[1] John xi. 23. [2] John xi. 25, 26.

hour is come that the Son of Man should be glorified ! were the materials out of which was built up a miraculous tale exactly effacing the truth which Jesus wished to convey. *Sed nondum est finis*, should always be our reflection in these cases. 'The end is not yet';[1] the space and scale required for working out the truths of the Bible are very large.

The developing of miracle out of slight materials is, however, common to our Evangelist with the Synoptics. Baur opposes these to our Evangelist in such a fashion, that one is sometimes tempted to ask whether he supposes, then, that the Synoptics are historical. They have, indeed, over our Evangelist certain advantages already noticed ; but historical they are no more than he is. A creative pressure on incidents they all alike exercise. A creative pressure, too, on the sayings of Jesus, the Synoptics as well as our Evangelist exercise, though in a different manner from his. Nay, sometimes he is more historical than the Synoptics. If we think of it seriously, for the words spoken by Jesus during his agony in the garden[2] the Synoptics could not possibly have had evidence, since the only companions of Jesus were asleep when the reported words were spoken. Their real source, probably, the Fourth Gospel discovers to us. This Gospel gives us two utterances of Jesus, made, one of them shortly before his arrest, the

[1] Matt. xxiv. 6. [2] Matt. xxvi. 39, 42.

other at the moment of it. 'Now is my soul troubled, and what shall I say: Father, save me from this hour? But for this cause came I unto this hour.'[1] And again: 'The cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?'[2] We have here, probably, the true original of the words assigned by the Synoptics to the prayer of agony in the garden.

Where the Synoptics are more historical than our Evangelist is in cases where knowledge of Jewish localities and usages is required. When he varies from them in such matters, however, it is because this sort of knowledge is lacking to him, not because he is warping facts to suit a design. Baur and his Tübingen school are confident that the truth of their theory about the Fourth Gospel is quite established by our Evangelist's account of the Last Supper and of the Crucifixion. Baur found design in the whole of it: design to discountenance any observance of the Passover Supper by Christians, design to identify the Passover sacrifice with the death of Christ, design to prove the ending of all things Jewish, the coming-in of the reign of *Pneuma*, or spirit. But how slight are his grounds when we examine them!

True, the Synoptics represent the Last Supper as eaten on the day when the Passover was eaten. This day was 'the fourteenth day of the first month at even,'[3]—the 14th of the Jewish month

[1] John xii. 27. [2] John xviii. 11. [3] Exodus xii. 18.

of Nisan; and the Crucifixion they represent as taking place on the day following, the 15th. True, the Fourth Gospel represents the Crucifixion as happening on the very same day on which the Passover was eaten,—on the 14th of Nisan, therefore, not on the 15th. On the morning of the Crucifixion, the Jews, says our Evangelist, would not enter the Prætorium, 'in order that they might not be defiled, but might eat the Passover';[1]—that Passover, which, according to the Synoptics, had been eaten the evening before! The Last Supper, then, must according to our Evangelist have been eaten on the 13th of Nisan, not on the 14th; not on the day appointed for eating the Jewish Passover.

There can be little doubt that the Synoptics, and not our Evangelist, are right, although the growing estrangement from things Jewish caused the Christian Church to explain their testimony away, and to assign the Crucifixion to the 14th of Nisan. *Christ did not eat the Paschal Lamb, he suffered as the Paschal Lamb*,[2] was the view which prevailed. In the latter half of the second century, we find a keen controversy turning, in fact, upon this,—whether the 14th of Nisan was the day on which Jesus ate the Last Supper, as the Passover Supper, with his

[1] John xviii. 28.

[2] See *Paschal Chronicle* (edition of Bonn), vol. i. p. 12.—*οὐκ ἔφαγεν τὸν νομικὸν ἀμνὸν ἐν ἐκείνῃ τῇ ἡμέρᾳ ὁ κύριος, ἀλλ' αὐτὸς ἔπαθεν ὡς ἀληθὴς ἀμνός.*

disciples. The Asiatic Churches contended that he did; and Polycrates, the aged Bishop of Ephesus, appealed[1] to the practice of the Apostle John, who, he said, had always observed the 14th as the day on which Jesus, keeping the Passover Supper, had eaten his last meal with the Twelve. But the Fourth Gospel puts this last meal on the 13th. It cannot, then, argues Baur, have proceeded from St. John. It was written by one of the anti-Jewish party, during the Paschal controversy, to put a stop to the identification of the Last Supper with the Jewish Passover.

It is certain that Rome, and the Christian Church at large, adopted the view that the 14th was the day of the Crucifixion, not of the Last Supper. There was, however, for the Church one cause of doubt and difficulty in the matter. How could it be that St. John, the author of the Fourth Gospel, kept the 14th as the day on which Jesus ate the Last Supper? This difficulty was got over by supposing that John, having to do with a number of Jewish Christians, had accepted, for the sake of peace, their identification of the Last Supper with the Passover, although he knew better all the time. In Bede's History, we find our English St. Wilfrid offering to doubters this explanation.[2]

[1] In his letter to Victor and the Church of Rome, quoted by Eusebius, *Hist. Eccles.* v. 24.

[2] Bede, *Hist. Eccles.* iii. 25.

Nothing can be more improbable than that St. John, knowing the observance of the 14th of Nisan as the day of the Last Supper to be an error, should nevertheless have countenanced the error by complying with it in his practice. The tradition that he kept the 14th may well be believed; but then he must have kept it with the sincere conviction that it was the day of the Last Supper. And so, no doubt, it was. John, then, cannot have written the eighteenth chapter of the Fourth Gospel, cannot have put the Crucifixion on the day when the Passover Supper was to be eaten. This we freely concede to Baur. But does the chapter aim, as Baur imagines, at marking, and marking with a controversial and anti-Jewish intention, an error of the Synoptics about the respective days of the Last Supper and of the Crucifixion? Is this the reason why John, who shared the error of the Synoptics if it was an error, cannot have written the chapter? By no means. St. John cannot have written it for the same reason that he cannot have talked of *Bethany beyond Jordan*, or made the high-priesthood of Caiaphas a yearly office. He cannot have written it because he was a Jew, and exactitude about Jewish days and ceremonies came natural to him. Now, it is simply for want, as it seems to us, of this exactitude, that the Fourth Gospel varies from the Synoptics in dating the Last Supper and the Crucifixion, not from any controversial design.

John's Greek editor knew Jewish usages, and liked to import them into his narrative. But he knew them loosely, as a foreigner, and he sometimes placed them incoherently. He is like Michelet enlivening his account of things English with traits of detail, and meaning to say that at a financial crisis in London there was 'consternation in Change Alley.' That would have been all very well. But Michelet says, instead of Change Alley, *Alley Change*. Perhaps neither a Greek nor a Frenchman could ever bring himself to learn with minute accuracy the details of any civilisation not his own. John's Greek editor knew the Jewish scrupulosity, and that a Jew in a state of defilement could not eat the Passover. He takes the occasion of Jesus being carried before Pilate to exhibit this piece of knowledge, and says that the Jews could not enter the Prætorium with Jesus, for fear they should be defiled and hindered from eating the Passover. He does not observe that he is thus contradicting the common tradition and the Synoptics, who represent the Passover as being eaten, not on the evening of the day of Christ's Crucifixion, but on the evening of the day before. Yet it may surely be seen, except by people bent on finding mountains in mole-hills, that he does not *mean* to contradict the Synoptics; for he calls the day of the Crucifixion the Preparation Day,[1] as they

[1] John xix. 31.

do. The Preparation Day was the day intervening between the 14th of Nisan and the Sabbath. If Jesus was crucified on the 14th of Nisan, the day for eating the Passover, that day could not at the same time be the Preparation Day, the day subsequent to the day for eating the Passover, and coming between that day and the Sabbath.

The truth is, on these topics of Jewish doings and ceremonies, our Greek editor is rather in a haze. Thus he talks of putting *a sponge on hyssop*[1] where the Synoptics talk of putting *a sponge on a cane*.[2] Hyssop is the Hebrew name for a plant probably something like our marjoram, with a close, bunching head of flowers, which can serve for a mop or a sponge. To talk of putting a sponge on hyssop is, therefore, like talking of putting a sponge on sponge. But our Greek editor knew the connection of hyssop with 'the blood of sprinkling,' and did not clearly know what hyssop was; so he makes it do duty for the cane of the Synoptics. He has no profound dogmatic design to represent the death of Christ otherwise than as the Synoptics represented it; but his hold on Jewish details is less firm than theirs, and his use of Jewish details more capricious.

Again, the whole story of the soldier piercing the side of Jesus with his spear is said by Baur to be an invention of our Evangelist with the

[1] John xix. 29. [2] Matt. xxvii. 48; Mark xv. 36.

design of identifying Jesus with the Paschal Lamb (*a bone of him shall not be broken!*), and of mystically representing, by the effusion of water and blood, the apparition of the new powers of *Logos* and *Pneuma*. No other Evangelist mentions the incident, argues Baur. The quotation from Exodus[1] shows what was in the writer's mind; and Apollinaris of Hierapolis, taking part in the Paschal controversy soon after the year 170 of our era, marks the figurative character of the incident, identifies Christ with the Paschal Lamb slain on the 14th of Nisan, and the water and blood with *Logos* and *Pneuma*.[2]

Now, the argument, that if an important thing in the Fourth Gospel is not found in the Synoptics also, it must be a mere invention of our Evangelist's, is always pressed by Baur against our Evangelist only. But why is it more incredible that the piercing of Christ's side, though given in the Fourth Gospel alone, should yet really have been matter of tradition, than that the last words of Jesus: *Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit*, which are in Luke only,[3] should proceed, not from Luke's own invention, but from a real tradition! Nor has the quotation: *A bone of him shall not be broken*,[4] in all probability the reference alleged. Not Exodus

[1] Exod. xii. 46.

[2] ἡ ιδ' τὸ ἀληθινὸν τοῦ κυρίου πάσχα, says Apollinaris; and presently afterwards: ὁ ἐκχέας ἐκ τῆς πλευρᾶς αὐτοῦ τὰ δύο πάλιν καθάρσια, ὕδωρ καὶ αἷμα, λόγον καὶ πνεῦμα.

[3] Luke xxiii. 46. [4] John xix. 36.

or the Paschal Lamb is probably here in our Evangelist's mind, but one of the Psalms on the preservation of the righteous: *Thou keepest all his bones, so that not one of them is broken.*[1] The form of the Greek verb corresponds with the form in this passage from the Psalms,[2] not in the passage from Exodus; which latter passage runs: 'Ye shall not break a bone thereof.' Besides, the Evangelist is heaping together instances of the fulfilment of predictions made by Prophet and Psalmist, and to suppose him suddenly turning to the Law and its precepts is not natural.

It is most probable that the side-piercing, followed by the appearance of something thought to resemble blood and water, was really, like our Evangelist's incidents in general, given by tradition. As early as Justin's time, nay, as early as the date of the Apocalypse, the passage from Zechariah,[3] which in the Greek Bible was mistranslated to mean: *They shall turn their eyes towards me in exchange for their insulting*,[4] had been altered to its true meaning: *They shall look on whom they pierced*, as it stands in the Fourth Gospel.[5] This proves, it is true, nothing as to

[1] Psalm xxxiv. 20.

[2] *συντριβήσεται*, and not *συμτρίψετε*. Some later manuscripts of the New Testament show the pressure to connect John xix. 36 with Exod. xii. 46, rather than with Ps. xxxiv. 20. See in Sabatier, *Bibliorum Sacrorum Latinæ Versiones Antiquæ*, his note on the verse in John.

[3] Zechariah xii. 10.

[4] *ἐπιβλέψονται πρός με ἀνθ' ὧν κατωρχήσαντο.*

[5] John xix. 37.—*ὄψονται εἰς ὃν ἐξεκέντησαν.*

the antiquity of the Fourth Gospel. Passages of the Old Testament which had a Messianic sense were early, as we have said already, corrected to bring this sense out, if before they obscured it. But it proves the antiquity of some tradition of a piercing which the passage in Zechariah suited. If the piercing had been merely that of the hands and feet by the nails, as given by one of the Messianic Psalms, the Greek verb of that Psalm would probably have been used for the prophecy of Zechariah also; now, a different verb is taken.[1]

We do not at all deny that the identification of Christ's sacrifice with the Paschal sacrifice was a conception entertained by our Evangelist, who speaks of *the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world*.[2] It was a conception familiar also to Paul,[3] and a conception just and natural. What we deny is that it has become with our Evangelist, any more than with Paul, the nucleus of a theory for which he combines, arranges, invents. In the Paschal controversy in the latter part of the second century, the idea had become a nucleus of this kind. There is no doubt as to what Apollinaris makes our Evangelist's words mean, any more than there is doubt as to what Baur makes our Evangelist's words mean. But, if our Evangelist had really meant what Apollinaris

[1] ἐξεκέντησαν instead of ὤρυξαν. See, in the Greek Bible, Psalm xxi. 16.

[2] John i. 29. [3] See 1 Cor. v. 7.

and Baur find in his words, he would have expressed himself somewhat as they do, he would have shown his intention as they do. Now, he expresses himself so very differently. Therefore we cannot credit him with the mystic meaning and design they suppose for him. 'The 14th is the true Passover of the Lord,' says Apollinaris: 'the great sacrifice, the Son of God in the lamb's stead.' Again: 'His holy side was pierced, and he shed back out of his side the two cleansers, water and blood, *word and spirit*.'[1] There is no uncertainty about the writer's intention, here; and if our Evangelist had invented his Gospel to serve the same intention, that intention would have been as manifest. Probably, however, what the water and blood figured to our Evangelist's mind was not *logos* and *pneuma* at all, but, — as the First Johannine Epistle indicates, and as Theophylact interpreted,[2] — the union of the human and divine natures in Christ. The water was a kind of celestial ichor, the blood was the blood of mortal man.

[1] See the fragment of Apollinaris in Otto, *Corpus Apologetarum Christianorum Sæculi Secundi*, vol. ix. p. 487; with the notes in that work both to the fragments of Apollinaris and to those of Melito of Sardis.

[2] In his Commentary on the Fourth Gospel. His words are: *τὸ μὲν αἷμα σύμβολον τοῦ εἶναι ἄνθρωπον τὸν σταυρωθέντα, τὸ δὲ ὕδωρ ὑπὲρ ἄνθρωπον, τοῦ εἶναι θεόν.*

VIII

Tried fairly, then, and without a preconceived theory to warp our criticism, the Fourth Gospel comes out no fancy-piece, but a serious and invaluable document, full of incidents given by tradition and of genuine 'sayings of the Lord.'

Sayings are not to be rejected as inventions too easily. They are not to be rejected because they seem strong and harsh, and we do not like them. For example, there is the saying of Jesus to the Jews about *their father the devil:* 'He was a manslayer from the beginning.'[1] Its violence is objected to. But the Peratæ quote it in substance, and that is an external testimony to its genuineness; the invectives against the Scribes and Pharisees in the Synoptics make it a not improbable saying in itself.

Neither are sayings to be rejected because they are profound, and over their hearers' heads; as, for example, the saying: 'Before Abraham was, I am.'[2] Ever since man appeared upon earth, the clearing and saving influences, which constitute the very being of Jesus, have been present and at work amongst mankind; often they have been latent, but they have been always there. And always has this gentle and healing virtue saved, and always has it been sacrificed; therefore Jesus was well called by Apostle and

[1] John viii. 44. [2] John viii. 58.

Seer, and well too might he have called himself: *The lamb slain from the foundation of the world.*[1] When he said to the Jews, 'Before Abraham was, I am,' Jesus then did but pursue, as he pursued on so many other occasions also, his lofty treatment of the themes of life and immortality, while his hearers stuck fast in their materialistic notions of them, and failed to follow his real meaning. In this there is nothing strange or incredible.

Nor, finally, are sayings to be rejected because they accommodate themselves to the materialism of the disciples. Only under these familiar figures of a bodily resurrection and a visible judgment-assize, of sitting on thrones to try the twelve tribes of Israel, of a heavenly Father's house with many mansions, could Jesus convey the ideas of happiness and recompense to these materialistically trained children of the new birth, whom yet to raise out of their materialism he for ever strove. If he was to say to them nothing but either what they could perfectly follow, or what they could not possibly misunderstand, he could not, as we have more than once said, have spoken to them at all. The only sayings we are called upon to reject are those which contradict the known manner and scope of Jesus, as his manner and scope are established for us by the mass of the evidence existing.

[1] Rev. xiii. 8; 1 Peter i. 19, 20.

But we do not require our reader, even, to be so chary as we ourselves have been, about admitting sayings of the Fourth Gospel as genuine. If he finds himself disposed to receive as genuine some sayings of Jesus at which we hesitate, so be it. For we have sought merely to establish a minimum of what must be received, not a maximum; to show, that after the most free criticism has been fairly and strictly applied, and all deductions, to the very outside of what such a criticism can require, have been fully made, there is yet left an authentic residue comprising all the profoundest, most important, and most beautiful things in the Fourth Gospel.

We have found, however, in our study of the Fourth Gospel, nothing to shake our opinion about the canonical Gospels in general and their history, but everything to confirm it. For at least fifty years after its production the Fourth Gospel appears not to have been in the settled state of Holy Scripture. There was a long period during which this Gospel yielded more easily to pressure, whether for altering its first contents or for interpolating additions to them, than it did afterwards. And so with our other three Gospels also.

The rudiments of all four Gospels were probably in existence and current by the year 120 of our era, at the very latest. As we accept the evidence of Basileides, to show that the Fourth Gospel in some shape or other already existed in

the early part of the second century, so we accept the evidence of Marcion to show the same thing for the Third Gospel, and that of Papias for the Second and First.[1] True, the description given by Papias does not accurately characterise our present Gospels either of Mark or Matthew.[2] But the hypothesis of other works of theirs being meant is extremely improbable, while it is not at all improbable that between the first appearance of a Gospel and its admission to canonicity it should have undergone alterations. The final admission of a Gospel to canonicity proves that it has long been in men's hands, and long been attributed to a venerable authority; that it has had time to gain their affections and to establish its superiority over competing accounts. To suppose as the originals of our First and Second Gospels such collections by Matthew and Mark as are described by Papias; to suppose as the original of our Third Gospel (which in its prologue tells us itself that in its present form it is not the work of an eye-witness but of a writer with two stages, even, between him and the eye-witnesses[3]) a work by the same hand from whence proceed those records in the

[1] See Eusebius, *Hist. Eccles.* iii. 39.

[2] Papias says of Matthew: τὰ λόγια συνεγράψατο. Of Mark he says that he wrote, ἀκριβῶς, οὐ μέντοι τάξει, τὰ ὑπὸ τοῦ Χριστοῦ ἢ λεχθέντα ἢ πραχθέντα. See the chapter of Eusebius just cited.

[3] The first stage is from the writer of our Third Gospel to the πολλοί, whose διηγήσεις he criticises; the second from these πολλοί to the αὐτόπται, the original eye-witnesses.

first person which crop out in the Acts; to suppose as the original of our Fourth Gospel data furnished by John at Ephesus,—is at once agreeable to what traditions we have, and also the most natural way of accounting for the facts which present themselves.

But to suppose that in our present Four Gospels we have the original works as they at first stood, that they were at their first birth formed into a Canon and thereby protected from alteration, is contrary both to the direct evidence we have and to probability. The descriptions of Papias do not, as we have said, at all well describe our present Gospels of St. Matthew and St. Mark. And we see that our Gospels had gradually to establish themselves, because before the time of Irenæus they are hardly ever quoted as Scripture, but after his time constantly. We know, too, that there were several other Gospels besides these, and that works not in our present Canon enjoyed such favour among Christians of the second century that even Irenæus quotes the *Pastor* of Hermas as 'Scripture,'[1] and a so-called Gospel of Peter was publicly read in Church with episcopal sanction.[2] We know,

[1] And in remarkable emphatic language: καλῶς οὖν εἶπεν ἡ γραφὴ ἡ λέγουσα, κ.τ.λ. The words of Irenæus are quoted by Eusebius, *Hist. Eccles.* v. 8.

[2] The bishop was Serapio, Bishop of Antioch from A.D. 191 to 213; the church was that of Rhossus in Cilicia. Serapio discovered afterwards that there was Docetism in the gospel of which he had inadvertently permitted the public reading. See Eusebius, *Hist. Eccles.* vi. 12.

above all, that there is no instance,—not one,—before the age of Irenæus and the last quarter of the second century, of even two or three consecutive verses being anywhere quoted just as we now read them in our Gospels.

Nay, so little were our Gospels documents sacred from the very first against all change and interpolation, that the habit of interpolation went on long after the Canon was formed, and the difference between the received text and that of the earliest manuscripts shows it. If the Vatican and Sinaitic manuscripts of the Fourth Gospel contain neither the story of the woman taken in adultery nor the account of the angel troubling the water in the pool of Bethesda; if, where the later manuscripts which our received text follows make Peter say: 'Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God,' the Vatican and Sinaitic make him say merely: 'Thou art the holy one of God';[1] and if this sort of change could befall a Gospel-text between the fourth century and the tenth, while it was Holy Scripture beyond question; how strong must have been the original bent to additions and interpolations, and how much more must the text have been exposed to them in its earlier and less closely watched period, when the settled stamp of Holy Scripture it as yet had not!

To suppose, therefore, that we have in our

[1] John vi. 69.

Gospels documents which can stand as the very original, strictly drawn up, strictly authenticated and strictly preserved depositions of eye-witnesses, is absurd. They arose not in the sort of world where depositions are taken, nor in the sort of world where manuscripts are guarded. They arose, and they passed many years, in the immense, underground, obscure, fluctuating world of the common people. Probably even neighbours and contemporaries never knew, or cared to know, quite accurately, the literary history of a document like one of our Gospels; and beyond question the knowledge, if it ever existed, was soon lost irrecoverably. The important inference to be drawn from this is, that the internal evidence must, in sayings and doings of Jesus which are given us in our Gospels, be considered with great care. Jesus was far over the heads of his reporters; he is not to be held responsible for their notions, or for all that they may make him do or say. And the way in which our Gospels arose and grew up was such, that pressure upon the stock of data furnished by the original eye-witnesses, and additions to this stock, and insertions, were extremely natural and extremely easy.[1]

[1] Nothing can be more vain, therefore, than attempts to *reconcile* our Four Gospels with one another, to make one exact, concordant and trustworthy history out of them. Griesbach, to whom the improvement of the New Testament text owes so much, has, in some remarks directed simply at the chronology of the Gospels, passed an excellent general criticism on all such attempts. He

In each of the chief Epistles of St. Paul, we have, much more indubitably than in any other New Testament documents, the real original production of the assumed author. Letters like his, with the strong stamp of the author's individuality, and following in general a continuous argument, lend themselves to additions and interpolations far less readily than works like the Gospels. We know, however, that forged epistles, covering themselves with the authority of apostolic names, were early current; and here too, therefore, the internal evidence must have great weight. The exact literary history of our documents is irrecoverable; and in the absence of it we cannot but have recourse to the test of internal evidence. But we ought, also, to resign ourselves to be ignorant of much, we ought to be sparing of vigorous and rigorous theories, to allow something to tradition, to dismiss the notion of sheer, designed forgery and imposture, to admit that for each and every Epistle, perhaps, in our Canon of the New Testament, there is something of a genuine basis.

Striking phrases from apostolic letters or addresses were likely to survive and float in men's memories though their context had been

says: 'Valde dubito, an ex Evangelistarum libellis harmonica componi possit narratio; quid enim, si nullus Evangelistarum ordinem temporis accurate ubique secutus est; et si sufficientia non adsunt indicia e quibus constare possit quisnam et quibusnam in locis a chronologico ordine recesserit? Atque in hac me esse hæresi fateor.'

lost. Here was the hint and at the same time the defence for an imitator, speaking in an Apostle's name, and, as he imagined, in that Apostle's sense. Everything is against the genuineness of the Second Petrine Epistle as a whole. But things like the phrase: 'Give diligence to make your calling and election sure,' in the first chapter,[1] and the passage beginning at the eighth verse of the third chapter and ending with the words: 'Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness,' may well have been Peter's, and their incorporation would have, probably, quite served to justify the Epistler both in his own eyes and in those of his public.

It is easy to be too sweepingly negative in these matters; easy, also, to think we can know more about them, and more certainly, than we can. To us it appears very rash to pronounce confidently against the First Johannine Epistle being St. John's. Certainly there is the difficulty of a Galilean fisherman learning to write Greek after the age of fifty; but, with this exception, almost all the difficulties are absent which make it so hard to think that St. John can have written the Fourth Gospel. The style is not flowing and articulated; the sentences come like minute-guns as they would drop from a natural Hebrew.

[1] 2 Peter i. 10.

The writer moves, indeed, amidst that order of religious ideas which meets us in the Fourth Gospel, and which was that of the Greek world wherein he found himself. He moves amongst these new ideas, however, not with the practised facility of the Evangelist, but with something of helplessness, although the depth and serene beauty of his spirit give to all he says an infinite impressiveness and charm. Save one ambiguous expression of Eusebius,[1] there is nothing to indicate that John's authorship of the First Epistle was in the early Church ever questioned. Papias used the Epistle,[2] and it may fairly be inferred from what Epiphanius says[3] that even the Alogi received it, although they rejected both the Fourth Gospel and the Apocalypse.

Of the authorship of the Apocalypse, all we can safely assert is what we learn from the book itself,—that the author was named John, and wrote in Asia. It was natural that this John in Asia, the recipient of so weighty

[1] *Hist. Eccles.* vi. 14.—μηδὲ τὰς ἀντιλεγομένας παρελθών, τὴν Ἰούδα λέγω καὶ τὰς λοιπὰς καθολικὰς ἐπιστολάς. The word λοιπάς is not certain, and even if it were, we could not be sure from the sentence, Eusebius being the sort of writer he is, that the First Johannine Epistle was disputed, or that Eusebius meant to say that it was.

[2] *Hist. Eccles.* iii. 39.

[3] *Hær.* LI. xxxiv. Epiphanius conjectures that the Alogi *must* have rejected the Epistles because they rejected the Gospel and the Apocalypse. If they *had* rejected the First Epistle, he would almost certainly have heard of it.

a revelation, should be identified with the Apostle John, and as early as the middle of the second century we find Justin Martyr thus identifying him.[1] But there was so little sureness about the matter, that for Eusebius, in the fourth century, the Apocalypse was no more than a disputed and doubtful book of Scripture, which a Christian might receive or not as he thought good. And to us it seems impossible to make out more than that the Apocalypse was written by a John, but by what John there is nothing to show.[2]

[1] *Dialogus cum Tryphone*, cap. 81.

[2] M. Renan's confident conclusion that the author was the Apostle John is one of the few points in his admirable criticism of the Apocalypse where he fails to carry us with him. His only serious argument is, that no one but an Apostle would have ventured to speak so authoritatively. But surely the recipient of this grand revelation would, as such, have felt himself entitled to be authoritative to any extent in delivering it.

CONCLUSION

THE Canon of the New Testament, then, is not what popular religion supposes; although, on the other hand, its documents are in some quarters the object of far too aggressive and sweeping negations. The most fruitful result to be gained from a sane criticism of the Canon is, that by satisfying oneself how the Gospel records grew up, one is enabled the better to account for much that puzzles us in their representation of Jesus,—of his words more especially. There were facilities for addition and interpolation, for adding touches to what the original accounts made Jesus do, for amplifying, above all, what they made Jesus say. Evidence such as apologists always imagine themselves to be using when they appeal to the Gospels,—the pure, first-hand, well-authenticated evidence of eye-witnesses,—our Gospels are not.

Such evidence is, indeed, remarkably wanting for the whole miraculous side in the doings recorded of Jesus. Sometimes we seem to be near getting such evidence, but it vanishes.

Jerome tells us that Quadratus, in the second century, declared that there were yet living in his time persons who had beheld with their eyes Jesus raise the dead to life, and that he himself had seen them and spoken with them. It happens that the declaration of Quadratus is preserved by Eusebius, in whose History Jerome probably read it. Quadratus undoubtedly says that in his time there were yet alive those who had witnessed the raising of the dead by Jesus; but the important addition which alone takes this statement out of the category of hearsay, and makes it personal evidence,—the addition that these alleged witnesses he himself had seen and known,—Quadratus does not make. The addition is merely a rhetorical flourish of Jerome's.[1]

No doubt this is so; yet the importance of it all is greatly diminished by one consideration. *If we had the original reports of the eye-witnesses, we should still have reports not essentially differing, probably, from those which we now use.* Certain additions which improved a miraculous story as it grew, certain interpolations which belong to the ideas and circumstances of a later age, would be absent. But we should most likely not have a miracle the less, and we should certainly find a similar mis-

[1] See Eusebius, *Hist. Eccles.* iv. 3; and Routh, *Reliquiæ Sacræ*, vol. i. pp. 71, 74. Routh quotes Jerome, and points out his exaggeration.

apprehension of Jesus and of what he intended. The people who saw Jesus were as certain to seek for miracles, and to find them, as the people who lived a generation or two later, or as the people who resort to Lourdes or to La Salette now. And this preoccupation with miracles was sure to warp their understanding of Jesus, and their report of his sayings and doings. The recurrence, so much talked of and recommended, to the Apostles, or to the first three centuries, for the pure rule of faith and the genuine doctrine of Jesus, is in truth therefore, however natural an expedient, an utterly futile one. There were indeed, as we have shown in *Literature and Dogma*, certain prominent points in the teaching of Jesus which his immediate followers had not yet lost sight of, and which fell more out of view afterwards. But the pure and genuine doctrine of Jesus neither his immediate followers, nor those whom they instructed, could possess; so immured were they in the ideas of their time and in the belief of the miraculous, so immeasurably was Jesus above them.

II

But our opponents say: 'Everything turns upon the question whether miracles do or did really happen; and you abstain from all attempt to prove their impossibility, you simply

assume that they never happen.' And this, which our opponents say, is true, and we have repeatedly admitted it. At the end of this investigation we admit it once more, and lay stress upon it. That miracles *cannot* happen we do not attempt to prove; the demonstration is too ambitious. That they *do not* happen, that what are called miracles are not what the believers in them fancy, but have a natural history of which we can follow the course, the slow action of experience, we say, more and more shows; and shows, too, that there is no exception to be made in favour of the Bible-miracles.

Epiphanius tells us, that at each anniversary of the miracle of Cana, the water of the springs of Cibyra in Caria and Gerasa in Arabia was changed into wine; that he himself had drunk of the transformed water of Cibyra, and his brothers of that of Gerasa.[1] Fifty years ago, a plain Englishman would have had no difficulty in thinking that the Cana miracle was true, and the other two miracles were fables. He is now irresistibly led to class all these occurrences in one category as unsubstantial tales of marvel. Scales seem to drop from his eyes in regard to miracles; and if he is still to hold fast his Christianity, it must no longer depend upon them.

It was not to discredit miracles that *Literature*

[1] Epiphanius, *Hær.* LI. xxx.

and Dogma was written, but because miracles are so widely and deeply discredited already. And it is lost labour, we repeat, to be arguing for or against them. Mankind did not originally accept miracles because it had formal proof of them, but because its imperfect experience inclined it to them. Nor will mankind now drop miracles because it has formal proof against them, but because its more complete experience detaches it from them. The final result was inevitable, as soon as ever miracles began to embarrass people, began to be relegated,—especially the greater miracles,—to a certain limited period long ago over. Irenæus says, that people in his time had arisen from the dead, 'and abode with us a good number of years.'[1] One of his commentators, embarrassed by such stupendous miracles occurring outside of the Bible, makes an attempt to explain away this remarkable allegation; but the most recent editor of Irenæus points out, with truth, that the attempt is vain. Irenæus was as sure to want and to find miracles as the Bible-writers were. And sooner or later mankind was sure to see how universally and easily stories like this of Irenæus arose, and that they arose with the Bible-writers just as they arose with Irenæus, and are not a whit more solid coming from them than from him.

[1] See Irenæus, *Adv. Hær.* lib. ii. cap. xxxii. 4; with the note on the passage in Stieren's edition.

A Catholic imagines that he gets over the difficulty by believing, or professing to believe, the miracles of Irenæus and Epiphanius, as well as those of the Bible-writers. But for him too, even for him, the *Time-Spirit* is gradually becoming too strong. As we may say in general, that, although an educated Protestant may manage to retain for his own lifetime the belief in miracles in which he has been brought up, yet his children will lose it; so to an educated Catholic we may say, putting the change only a little farther off, that (unless some unforeseen deluge should overwhelm European civilisation, leaving everything to be begun anew) his grandchildren will lose it. They will lose it insensibly, as the eighteenth century saw the gradual extinction, among the educated classes, of that belief in witchcraft which in the century previous a man like Sir Matthew Hale could affirm to have the authority of Scripture and of the wisdom of all nations,—spoke of, in short, just as many religious people speak of miracles now. Witchcraft is but one department of the miraculous; and it was comparatively easy, no doubt, to abandon one department, when men had all the rest of the region to fall back upon. Nevertheless the forces of experience, which have prevailed against witchcraft, will inevitably prevail also against miracles at large, and that by the mere progress of time.

The charge of presumption, and of setting

oneself up above all the great men of past days, above 'the wisdom of all nations,' which is often brought against those who pronounce the old view of our religion to be untenable, springs out of a failure to perceive how little the abandonment of certain long-current beliefs depends upon a man's own will, or even upon his sum of powers, natural or acquired. Sir Matthew Hale was not inferior in force of mind to a modern Chief Justice because he believed in witchcraft. Nay, the more enlightened modern, who drops errors of his forefathers by help of that mass of experience which his forefathers aided in accumulating, may often be, according to the well-known saying, 'a dwarf on the giant's shoulders.' His merits may be small compared with those of the giant. Perhaps his only merit is, that he has had the good sense to get up on the giant's shoulders, instead of trotting contentedly along in his shadow. Yet even this, surely, is something.

III

We have to renounce impossible attempts to receive the legendary and miraculous matter of Scripture as grave historical and scientific fact. We have to accustom ourselves to regard henceforth all this part as poetry and legend. In the Old Testament, as an immense poetry growing round and investing an immortal

truth, the 'secret of the Eternal':[1] *Righteousness is salvation.* In the New, as an immense poetry growing round and investing an immortal truth, the secret of Jesus: *He that will save his life shall lose it, he that will lose his life shall save it.*

The best friends of mankind are those who can lead it to feel animation and hope in presence of the religious prospect thus profoundly transformed. The way to effect this is by bringing men to see that our religion, in this altered view of it, does but at last become again that religion which Jesus Christ really endeavoured to found, and of which the truth and grandeur are indestructible. We should do Christians generally a great injustice, if we thought that the entire force of their Christianity lay in the fascination and subjugation of their spirits by the miracles which they suppose Jesus to have worked, or by the materialistic promises of heaven which they suppose him to have offered. Far more does the vital force of their Christianity lie in the boundless confidence, consolation, and attachment, which the whole being and discourse of Jesus inspire. What Jesus then himself thought sufficient, Christians too may bring themselves to accept with good courage as enough for them. What Jesus himself dismissed as chimerical, Christians too may bring themselves to put aside without dismay.

The central aim of Jesus was to transform

[1] Psalm xxv. 14.

for every religious soul the popular Messias-ideal of his time, the ideal of happiness and salvation of the Jewish people; to disengage religion, one may say, from the materialism of the Book of Daniel. Fifty years had not gone by after his death, when the Apocalypse replunged religion in this materialism; where, indeed, it was from the first manifest that replunged, by the followers of Jesus, religion must be. It was replunged there, but with an addition of inestimable value and of incalculable working,—the figure and influence of Jesus. Slowly this influence emerges, transforms the turbid elements amid which it was thrown, brings back the imperishable ideal of its author. To the mind of Jesus, his own resurrection after a short sojourn in the grave was the victory of his cause after his death, and at the price of his death. His disciples materialised his resurrection; and their version of the matter falls day by day to ruin. But no ruin or contradiction befalls the version of Jesus himself. He *has* risen, his cause has conquered; the course of events continually attests his resurrection and victory. The manifest unsoundness of popular Christianity inclines at present many persons to throw doubts on the truth and permanence of Christianity in general. Creeds are discredited, religion is proclaimed to be in danger, the pious quake, the world laughs. Nevertheless *the prince of this world is judged;*[1]

[1] John xvi. 11.

the victory of Jesus is won and sure. Conscience and self-renouncement, the method and the secret of Jesus, are set up as a leaven in the world, nevermore to cease working until the world is leavened. That this is so, that the resurrection and re-emergent life of Jesus are in this sense undeniable, and that in this sense Jesus himself predicted them, may in time, surely, encourage Christians to lay hold on this sense as Jesus did.

So, too, with the hope of immortality. Our common materialistic notions about the resurrection of the body and the world to come are, no doubt, natural and attractive to ordinary human nature. But they are in direct conflict with the new and loftier conceptions of life and death which Jesus himself strove to establish. His secret, *He that will save his life shall lose it, he that will lose his life shall save it*, is of universal application. It judges, not only the life to which men cling here, but just as much the life we love to promise ourselves in the New Jerusalem. The immortality propounded by Jesus must be looked for elsewhere than in the materialistic aspirations of our popular religion. *He lived in the eternal order, and the eternal order never dies ;*— this, if we may try to formulate in one sentence the result of the sayings of Jesus about life and death, is the sense in which, according to him, we can rightly conceive of the righteous man as immortal, and aspire to be immortal ourselves.

And this conception we shall find to stand us in good stead when the popular materialistic version of our future life fails us. So that here again, too, the version which, unfamiliar and novel as it may now be to us, has the merit of standing fast and holding good while other versions break down, is at the same time the version of Jesus.

People talk scornfully of a 'sublimated Christianity,' as if the Christianity of Jesus Christ himself had been a materialistic fairy-tale like that of Messrs. Moody and Sankey. On the contrary, insensibly to lift us out of all this sort of materialism was Jesus Christ's perpetual endeavour. The parable of the king, who made a marriage for his son, ends with the episode of the guest who had not on a wedding garment, and was cast out.[1] And here, as usual, the Tübingen critics detect *tendence*. They see in the episode a deliberate invention of the Evangelist; a stroke of Jewish particularism, indemnifying itself for having had to relate that salvation was preached in the highways. We have disagreed often with the Tübingen critics, and we shall venture finally to disagree with them here. We receive the episode as genuine; but what did Jesus mean by it? Shall we not do well in thinking, that he, whose lucidity was so incomparable, and who indicated so much which was to be seized not by the

[1] Matt. xxii. 1-14.

present but by the future, here marked and meant to mark, although but incidentally and in passing, the profound, the utter insufficiency of popular religion? Through the turbid phase of popular religion his religion had to pass. Good and bad it was to bear along with it; the gross and ignorant were to be swept in, by wholesale, from the highways; *the wedding was to be furnished with guests.* On this wise must Christianity needs develop itself, and the necessary law of its development was to be accepted. Vain to be too nice about the unpreparedness of the guests in general, about their inevitable misuse of the favours which they were admitted to enjoy! What could have been the end of such a fastidious scrutiny? To turn them all out into the highways again! But the king's design was, that *the wedding should be furnished with guests.* So the guests shall all stay and fall to;—popular Christianity is founded. But presently, almost as if by accident, a guest even more unprepared and gross than the common, a guest 'not having on a wedding garment,' comes under the king's eye, and is ejected. Only one is noted for decisive ejection; but ah! how many of those guests are as really unapt to seize and follow God's designs for them as he! *Many are called, few chosen.*

The conspicuous delinquent is sentenced to be bound hand and foot, and taken away, and

cast into outer darkness. In the severity of this sentence, Jesus marks how utterly those who are gathered to his feast may fail to know him. The misapprehending and materialising of his religion, the long and turbid stage of popular Christianity, was, however, inevitable. But to give light and impulsion to future times, Jesus stamps this Christianity, even from the very moment of its birth, as, though inevitable, not worthy of its name; as ignorant and transient, and requiring all who would be truly children of the kingdom to rise beyond it.

END OF VOL. VIII.

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